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The modern Russian authoritarian regime has been more successful than the communist regime of the Soviet Union at managing the elements of national power within the great power competition by increasing its emphasis on active measures as a critical capability. This paper will highlight the history of the Soviet Union with emphasis on how active measures became a critical capability. Active measures are a doctrinal concept of managing information to gain advantage by surprise or deception. The term active measures is a Soviet doctrinal concept that is synonymous with the modern terms associated with New Generation or Non-Linear Warfare. Russia has adapted the characteristics of its authoritarian governance in ways that have enabled a more successful application of active measures. Russia's employment of active measures throughout the elements of national power has significantly impacted Russia's ability to regain its status as a peer competitor since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The ability to orchestrate active measures successfully is distinguishable in Russia due to how Russia's anocracy employs active measures across the DIME, in lieu of armed conflict or in support of armed conflict, in order to create an asymmetric advantage.

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Russia's Active Measures in an Era of Great Power Competition

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Executive Summary

Title: Russia's Active Measures within the Great Power Competition

Author: Major Robert W. Viehmeyer United States Marine Corps

Thesis: The modern Russian authoritarian regime has been more successful than the communist regime of the Soviet Union at managing the elements of national power within the great power competition by increasing its emphasis on active measures as a critical capability.

Discussion: This paper will highlight the history of the Soviet Union with emphasis on how active measures became a critical capability. Active measures are synonymous with many of the current terms applicable within New Generation Warfare as it relates to disinformation as a political weapon. Russia has adapted the characteristics of its authoritarian governance in ways that have enabled a more successful application of active measures. Russia's employment of active measures throughout the elements of national power has significantly impacted Russia's ability to regain its status as a peer competitor since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Conclusion: The guided democracy led by Vladimir Putin has implemented active measures, resulting in the success and legitimacy of Russia within the competition for power. The authoritarian government is unencumbered by an ideology, which facilitates political flexibility. Vladimir Putin's authoritarian leadership has enabled the orchestration of active measures throughout all elements of national power. The ability to orchestrate this critical capability successfully is distinguishable in Russia due to how Russia employs active measures across the DIME, in lieu of armed conflict or in support of armed conflict, in order to create an asymmetric advantage.

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Introduction

Over the last three decades, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), now Russian Federation, has transitioned from a communist totalitarian regime to an anocracy with an authoritarian ruler unencumbered by ideology. Russia's modern authoritarian regime has successfully managed the elements of national power to become a peer competitor of the United States. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia has been cautious about entering into direct conflict with great powers such as the United States. Therefore, Russia sought other means to gain asymmetric advantages during their rise in status to a great power competitor. Russia's approach to gaining an asymmetric advantage is heavily reliant on a critical capability that has roots within Soviet history, with the distinguishing characteristics relating to ideology, technology, and the ability to more succinctly orchestrate activity across the elements of national power. The modern Russian authoritarian regime has been more successful than the communist regime of the Soviet Union at managing the elements of national power within the great power competition by increasing its emphasis on active measures as a critical capability.

Active Measures are a doctrinal concept of managing information to gain an advantage by surprise or deception. This information can be verbal, written, oral, or even physical movements in which the visual action supports deceptive information, such as troop movements or concentrations to deceive the enemy from the meaningful strategic maneuvering. Russia has maintained a focus on surprise, deception, and manipulation in order to identify and capitalize on enemy vulnerabilities. These concepts of managing perceptions to gain an advantage by surprise or deception were known to them doctrinally as active measures and 'Maskirovka'.

Active measures throughout Russia's history have been a critical capability employed from the tactical through the strategic level. The use of active measures within the KGB demonstrates how critical and widely this strategy has been to Russia. Active measures, according to Major General Oleg Kalugin, former KGB, were "the heart and soul of Soviet intelligence."¹ The Soviet doctrinal approach of active measures have translated today into terms such as hybrid warfare, Phase 0 operations, new-generation warfare, non-linear warfare, and the human domain.² The term active measures is synonymous with many of today's westernized terms, but ultimately "refers to Soviet actions of political warfare used to influence the course of world events, including supporting communist and socialist opposition groups, and general targeting of Western institutions."³ Therefore, active measures should be framed as a critical capability, recognizing the Soviet Union's intent to use active measures against adversaries to identify their vulnerabilities, create leverage, and gain an asymmetric advantage. This is confirmed as a critical capability supporting a main effort of the Soviet Union by former KGB informant Yuri Bezmenov, whom "estimated that in the 1970s, active measures comprised around 85% of total KGB activities."⁴

As a continuation of USSR strategy, Russia has successfully employed active measures throughout all elements of national power. For the purposes of this paper, the elements of national power are diplomacy, information, military, and economics (DIME). Both the leadership of the USSR and the Russian Federation were advantaged in managing the integration

¹ Oleg Kalugin, "Inside the KGB: An interview with Retired KGB Maj. Gen. Oleg Kalugin," Cold War Experience, CNN January 1998, <http://www3.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/episode/21interviews/kalugin>.

² Timothy Thomas, "The Evolving Nature of Russia's Way of War." *Military Review* 97 (4), 2017: 34-42. <https://search-proquest-com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/1922371727?accountid=14746>.

³ William Chim, "Russia's Digital Awakening." *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 17, no. 2, 2018, 6. <https://doi.org/10.11610/connections.17.2.01>.

⁴ Yuri Bezmenov and G. Edward Griffin, *Soviet Subversion of the Free World Press: A Conversation with Yuri Bezmenov, former propagandist for the KGB* (Westlake Village, CA: American Media, 1984), www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzKI6OF9yVM.

of active measures by leveraging authoritarian rule to achieve holistic asymmetric advantages throughout each element of national power. The integration of active measures throughout DIME is critical, because strength in one element can support deception in an area of weakness or provide greater support to a priority effort. The Soviet era further exemplified this principle with consideration to how active measures were employed in lieu of armed conflict; and modern Russia employed both in lieu of and in support of armed conflict.

While this paper is intended to highlight the continuation of active measures in modern Russia, it is significant to highlight that the comparisons do not perfectly mirror the past. Distinctions between historic and modern active measure include the obvious modernization of technology that Russia can leverage, but more significantly the changes in the global climate that has been led by China and Russia. The Soviet Union was often competing internally and internationally with the ideology of Communism. This ideology would restrict the maneuverability of active measures for fear of being hypocritical to the communist image.

One of Vladimir Putin's top aides and political advisor developed a Russian version of "guided democracy" known as "sovereign democracy."⁵ By claiming to be a sovereign democracy, Putin proclaimed to the world that his sovereign country was in fact democratic and that any attempt by an outside sovereign to validate the Russian democracy would be an offense taken upon Russia's domestic affairs.⁶ More recently President Xi Jinping, of China, announced himself as a new model of totalitarianism.⁷ With the change in Chinese leadership came a change in the Chinese constitution to include identifying Xi's "new era of socialism with Chinese

⁵ Chim, "Russia's Digital Awakening," 8.

⁶ Maria Lipman, Putin's Sovereign Democracy, Carnegie Moscow Center, July 15, 2016. <https://carnegie.ru/2006/07/15/putin-s-sovereign-democracy-pub-18540>.

⁷ Jackson Diehl, "China's Communist leadership has a model of totalitarianism for the 21st Century," *The Washington Post*, October 29, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/chinas-communist-leadership-has-a-model-of-totalitarianism-for-the-21st-century/2017/10/29/8b32fb10-ba74-11e7-a908-a3470754bbb9_story.html

characteristics.”⁸ Just as with Russia’s claim of sovereign democracy, China vowed that anyone opposing these claims was an enemy of the state.⁹ The claim to maintain Chinese characteristics is similar to that of Russia’s current outlook, but one key difference is that China is arguably totalitarian, whereas Russia’s modern authoritarian system is not so clearly totalitarian. Putin has given Russia extreme flexibility in how to maneuver his elements of national power without politically restrictive ideologies. This maneuverability is based on the fact that “Putin’s Russia does not really fit the totalitarian model; its authoritarianism is based on manipulation through information, rather than trying to instill belief in a single ideology.”¹⁰ This change in Russia’s political characteristics is a distinguishing factor, along with modernization, that has enabled Russia to better leverage Russia’s approach of active measures when compared to the Soviet Union’s capability.

The United States has been unable to maintain a position of advantage over the USSR following World War II, or Russia following the collapse of the USSR, when considering DIME as the principle metrics for analyzing national power. The United States was considered a global superpower post World War II, advancing its position with the benefit of the strongest military, economy, and varying degrees of supremacy across the DIME. Russia’s ability to influence the United States and other global actors across the DIME spectrum is evidence that Russia has regained its status as a peer competitor under its modern authoritarian government. Russia’s capabilities have waxed and waned throughout the twentieth-century but have ultimately proven resilient and powerful across the DIME under the leadership of Vladimir Putin.

⁸ Diehl, “China’s Communist leadership has a model of totalitarianism for the 21st Century.”

⁹ Diehl, “China’s Communist leadership has a model of totalitarianism for the 21st Century.”

¹⁰ Paul Jackson, “Totalitarianism in the twentieth century and beyond,” *Open Democracy*, August 27, 2019. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/countering-radical-right/totalitarianism-twentieth-century-and-beyond/>

This paper will examine how the Russian authoritarian government of today employs a Soviet strategy of active measures to achieve advantage across the DIME, for the purpose of regaining its status as a great power competitor. The practice of active measures will be emphasized through examples of historical and current case studies across the DIME, in order to highlight that new terminology does not equate to new strategy. This research will also analyze significant historical events, specific to politics and war, that have shaped the competition for power between Russia and the United States.

Russia's successful continuation of the active measures strategy under Vladimir Putin can be given more validity with a brief understanding of the Soviet Union's history of mistrust with the United States and Russia's employment of active measures. To further explain the life cycle of Russia and in order to provide context into Russia's current strategy and national power interests, this paper will examine Russia's history with special interest in how that history intersects with the United States' and Russian interests.

Soviet Active Measures

Despite the alliance between the Soviet Union and the United States during World War II, the events that unfolded after the allied victory reignited a distrust between the two powers creating a significant long-term diplomatic impact. The post war negotiations created the greatest distrust and tension between the Soviet Union and Western aligned powers. After the Allies, to include the Soviet Union, won World War II, the United States was left with the strongest economy and military. The United States used its position of economic, military, and nuclear strength as leverage throughout the diplomatic negotiations post World War II.¹¹

¹¹ Vladamir Pechatnov, Melvyn Leffler, Westad Odd Arne, "The Soviet Union and The World, 1944-1953," In *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, 96-98.

The aftermath of World War II found the Soviet Union in a juxtaposed position of strength and weakness. Diplomatically speaking, across the globe if not amongst the warring allies, the Soviet Union found itself with broader legitimacy in that the “Stalinist System survived the test” and gave the Communist regime broader legitimacy.¹² The legitimacy of the communist system was the enduring strength for Stalin going forward after the Soviet Union felt disavowed by the United States. Although the Soviet Union was globally legitimized as a strong communist nation, it suffered significant losses throughout World War II and anticipated significant reciprocity after the war. The Soviet losses consisted of significant human resources from war casualties as well as industrial and economic capacity, which left them facing significant challenges in the upcoming reconstruction period.¹³ The Soviet Union anticipated equal diplomatic status amongst allied partners as they negotiated the spoils of war, expecting to regain territory previously lost to Japan in 1904-1905; reestablish its pre-World War I border; and extend its influence into northern Iran, the Turkish Straits, and the Mediterranean.¹⁴ The Soviets anticipated some territory would be reparations and others would be regained by “building up its national-military base.”¹⁵ However, the Truman administration decided to take a hardline approach in an effort to contain the Soviets’ power to prevent future wars and create an international environment that best suited the United States, knowing that Stalin intended to declare war almost immediately after World War II in order to capitalize on global weaknesses and increase his strength and legitimacy.¹⁶

¹² Pechatnov, “The Soviet Union and The World,” 90.

¹³ Pechatnov, “The Soviet Union and The World,” 90.

¹⁴ Pechatnov, “The Soviet Union and The World,” 92.

¹⁵ Pechatnov, “The Soviet Union and The World,” 91.

¹⁶ Melvyn Leffler, and Westad Odd Arne Westad, Cambridge: “The Emergence of an American Grand Strategy, 1945-1952,” in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, 68.

The United States acknowledged the legitimacy of the Soviet Union by recognizing that the Soviets' strength and principal threat was "political and psychological"¹⁷ and that the greatest risk to the United States, within the context of Europe, was that the USSR might be able to take advantage of the "technical skills and advanced industries"¹⁸ within countries that required significant economic and infrastructure recovery. The United States had the asymmetric advantage executing its diplomatic agenda immediately following World War II, predominately because of its monopoly on nuclear capability.

An 'active measure' employed by the Soviets in response to challenging negotiations during post-war negotiations was a renewed effort of Stalin's 'popular front strategy' that facilitated communist influence masked by a front of democracy and free market.¹⁹ The employment of the popular front strategy is an active measure that the USSR, as part of the Comintern, used in the 1930s, "which went beyond the concept of a 'united front' of Communists and Socialists to advocate the formation of popular fronts comprising not only leftists but also liberals, moderates, and even conservatives opposed to Fascism. The goal of revolution was deferred until the immediate battle at hand was won, and Communists were urged not to frighten away the non-Communists in the coalition with revolutionary rhetoric."²⁰ This renewed active measure tactic was once again being employed during post World War II negotiations during a time when the Soviets were still unsure what they could still gain from the United States. Stalin recognized it would be unwise to be a boisterous communist, but it can be argued he was always hedging diplomacy to his advantage.

¹⁷ Leffler and Odd, *The Emergence of An American Grand Strategy*, 77.

¹⁸ Leffler and Odd, *The Emergence of An American Grand Strategy*, 77.

¹⁹ Pechatnov, *The Soviet Union and The World*, 94

²⁰ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Popular Front," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Encyclopaedia Britannica, inc., January 9, 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/popular-front-European-coalition>.

As an active measure against the U.S. nuclear capability, Joseph Stalin was outwardly dismissive of a nuclear weapons strategic influence, praising his concept of “permanently operating factors” of war focusing on mass armies and societal strengths, as opposed to “transitory factors” such as deception or surprise.²¹ Joseph Stalin reinforced these proclaimed beliefs by building mass ground armies, and “by holding Western Europe hostage, so to speak, the Soviet Union had a credible deterrent against U.S. initiation of war.”²² Although the Soviets lacked an atomic capability, this active measure of displaying the strength of Soviet ground forces offset the U.S. strengths by exploiting the U.S. socio-cultural and political system. The exploitation stemmed from the Soviets emphasizing the strength of ground forces and instilling fears in Europe, and therefore the U.S. While building massive ground armies and propagandizing the lack of credibility regarding U.S. nuclear deterrence in support of influencing diplomacy, the Soviet Union effectively developed an atomic capability, detonating their first atomic weapon on 29 August 1949.²³

The final apportionment that allowed the Soviets to develop its political capital and assert its diplomatic will through military capability was its transition from Stalin’s non-transitory thought process to new doctrine supported by the Soviet development of Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile capability (ICBM). Upon achieving polarity followed shortly by superior atomic capabilities, the USSR was able to adapt its strategies, using its current capabilities to employ new active measures to gain influence. The impact is clear because, “once the Soviet Union attained ICBM capability in 1957, the preemptive strategy became much more feasible;

²¹ Jonathan Lockwood, Kathleen O’Brien Lockwood, *Russian View Of U.S. Strategy: Its Past, Its Future*, New Brunswick, New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, 1993, 29-30.

²² Thomas Wolfe, “Soviet Power and Europe, 1945-1970” Baltimore, MD. John Hopkins Press, 1970, 32-35

²³ David Stone, *A Military History of Russia: from Ivan the Terrible to the War in Chechnya*, Westport Connecticut, Praeger Security International, 2006, 222.

the means of surprise attack now had become nearly invulnerable and unstoppable,”²⁴ thereby facilitating a change in Soviet doctrine, diplomatic status, and global influence.

Even during the 1960s when western analysts believed the Soviets would conduct a “massive retaliation” with their nuclear capabilities if the U.S. were to initiate a war, the Soviet leadership acknowledged that the next war could be nuclear, but that “now war might arise without the traditional clearly threatening period,”²⁵ implying the Soviet’s willingness to initiate a nuclear attack with surprise. Although the Soviet Union crumbled at the end of the Cold War, without using its nuclear capability, it is Russia’s status as a nuclear power that has been a critical anchor to maintaining the country’s diplomatic survival and legitimacy.

When it became clearer that the alliance was no longer, and the Soviet Union gained nuclear symmetry, the Soviet Union was able to employ its leverage elsewhere. The Soviets’ ability to attain global legitimacy and influence throughout the Cold War, as the Soviets continued a trend of aligning with U.S. adversaries and maintained a constant state of competition, was in large part due to active measures that masked the Soviets’ true purpose. This influence can be seen with the USSR developing a mutually beneficial relationship with Chinese Communist after their civil war. This relationship ultimately resulted in the Chinese agreeing to the Soviet request to employ Chinese troops in support of spreading communism to North Korea. There is a historic precedence of the Soviet Union’s influence with adversarial nations during the Vietnam War and the Cuban Missile Crisis, and that influence has extended into modern day operations as evidenced in Russia’s current involvement against U.S. interests in Europe and the Middle East. As with any nation, Russian history provides context and reasoning for its current actions, intentions, and implications.

²⁴ Lockwood, *Russian View Of U.S. Strategy: Its Past, Its Future*, 31.

²⁵ Lockwood, *Russian View Of U.S. Strategy: Its Past, Its Future*, 32.

The active measures that followed World War II and those employed throughout the Cold War highlight the distrust amongst the USSR and the United States. However, the USSR employed active measures well before World War II. There is evidence of Soviet involvement in escalating U.S. racial tensions as early as 1928, in order to increase the schism within the country and highlight U.S. hypocrisy while increasing positive public opinion of communism. In 1928, the Soviet led Communist International (COMINTERN) organization, had put a plan in place that intended to recruit southern blacks with the goal of creating their own communist state within the United States.²⁶ The Soviets continued their propaganda throughout the great depression to instigate further racial divide and highlight the hypocrisy of democracy. A metric of this successful propaganda campaign is that “it brought over African-American workers and sharecroppers with the promise of the freedom to work and live unburdened by the violent restrictions of Jim Crow.”²⁷

This continued on into the Cold War, when early in the war, “there was a recognition that the U.S. couldn’t lead the world if it was seen as repressing people of color.”²⁸ The Soviets magnified the civil unrest throughout the Civil Rights Movement in the United States to highlight U.S. hypocrisy of mistreatment in a democratized country, while highlighting a utopian communist lifestyle. The effectiveness of Soviet propagandist dissemination of information, on their diplomatic and strategic goals, can be felt by examining the impact on the Truman administration regarding U.S. strategic interests such as India, which had a greater focus on race

²⁶ Julia Ioffe, “The History of Russian Involvement in America's Race Wars,” *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, May 25, 2019. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/russia-facebook-race/542796/>.

²⁷ Ioffe, “The History of Russian Involvement in America's Race Wars.”

²⁸ Mary L. Dudziak, *Mary Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011.

relations than any other country, despite the irony of India having a caste system.²⁹ The U.S. Ambassador said the number one question received was “What about America’s treatment of the Negro.”³⁰ There are examples of Soviet propagandist distributing articles to India highlighting the deadly treatment of Native Americans and comparing that life and future to the African American.³¹ The strategy of active measures throughout the Cold War era “sought to divide the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance, subvert governments not aligned with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and shape the class consciousness of targeted societies to make them more amenable to the communist agenda.”³²

Methods in which the Soviet Union targeted supporters from the United States and the international community is through cultural front organizations and media services available at the time. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, organized, controlled, and paid for organizations³³ within a myriad of demographic and social environments to spread socialist propaganda. These groups ranged from student organizations such as the International Union of Students, workers unions such as the World Federation of Trade Unions, and a network of friendship societies across the world under the umbrella of the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. There was clear media influence within newspapers, beginning with the establishment of *The Daily Worker*, which began being published in the 1920s as “the semi-official voice of the party,” and was renamed *The Worker* in 1958, the *Daily World* in

²⁹ Mary Dudziak, "Cold War Civil Rights: The Relationship between Civil Rights and Foreign Affairs in the Truman Administration," Order No. 9314801, Yale University, 1992, Pg 63-64. <https://search-proquest-com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/304005069?accountid=14746>.

³⁰ Dudziak, "Cold War Civil Rights: The Relationship between Civil Rights and Foreign Affairs in the Truman Administration," Pg. 61-65.

³¹ Dudziak, "Cold War Civil Rights: The Relationship between Civil Rights and Foreign Affairs in the Truman Administration," Pg. 64.

³² T.S. Allen and A.J. Moore, “21st Century Political Warfare: Victory without Casualties: Russia’s information Operations,” *Parameters: The U.S. Army War College Quarterly*, Vol 48, No 1, 2018. 61.

³³ Communist Front Organizations, Global Security, June 1, 2018. <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/int/comintern-front.htm>

the 1970s, and the *People's Daily World* in 1986.³⁴ The propaganda from that newspaper lives online today under the name of *The People's World*.

The Russian Federation

Following the fall of the Soviet Union the first active measures in Russia were failures that took place at the onset of The First Chechen War, under the leadership of Boris Yeltsin. What led to the war was Boris Yeltsin's efforts to prevent Chechnya from becoming an independent country. Yeltsin's attempts at diplomacy were proving ineffective, so fifteen days before the main invasion, dozens of tanks and armored personnel carriers poured into Chechnya, in what was presented as a push by Chechen opposition groups to topple Mr. Dudayev. The attack fit into a Russian narrative – repeated today in eastern Ukraine – that Moscow was simply a bystander in a local conflict.³⁵ Russia's active measure was quickly countered “when Chechen fighters halted the advance, captured tank crews, revealed them to be Russian, and paraded them before Russian and foreign journalists,”³⁶ arguably similar to more recent events in Syria. Following the failed attempt to deceive the Chechen or the international community Russia employed its conventional forces resulting in greatly embarrassing results for Russia. The failures of the First Chechen War, were a key factor that led to the political fall of Boris Yeltsin and the rise of Vladimir Putin³⁷, whom vowed to avenge the embarrassment brought on by war the and liberal alignment of the 1990s.³⁸

³⁴ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, *Daily Worker: American Newspaper*, Britannica, Encyclopedia. Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Daily-Worker>

³⁵ Andrew Higgins, “The War that Continues to Shape Russia, 25 Years Later,” *The New York Times*, December 10, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/10/world/europe/photos-chechen-war-russia.html>

³⁶ Higgins, “The War that Continues to Shape Russia.”

³⁷ Higgins, “The War that Continues to Shape Russia.”

³⁸ Michael Crowley, “Putins' Revenge: Humiliated by the 1990s, Russia's strongman is determined to win Cold War 2.0, He may be succeeding,” *Politico European Edition*, December 12, 2016. <https://www.politico.eu/article/vladimir-putin-cold-war-revenge-russia-united-states/>

Just as Joseph Stalin employed the active measure of a ‘popular front strategy’ to mask his true political identity, so too did Vladimir Putin. One of Vladimir Putin’s top aides and political advisor developed a Russian version of “guided democracy” known as “sovereign democracy.”³⁹ By claiming to be a sovereign democracy, Putin proclaimed to the world that his sovereign country was in fact democratic and that any attempt by an outside sovereign to validate the Russian democracy would be an offense taken upon Russia’s domestic affairs.⁴⁰

Despite Russia’s claims to be a political democracy, Vladimir Putin’s very recent efforts to alter the constitution to keep himself in power highlight the advantages of active measures within authoritarian governance without the ideology associated with communism.

Authoritarian governments have a significant advantage over the United States, in the sense that their leadership can implement a long-term, whole of government strategy supervised by life-long leaders, whereas the United States’ geo-political and domestic strategies can change with every election. This authoritarian government coupled with authoritarian managed capitalism has enabled Russia to pull itself out of the trenches of Soviet collapse, and rise to the status of a peer competitor with the ability to influence the United States in all aspects of national power.⁴¹ The remainder of this paper will highlight how a modern Russian authoritarian has leveraged his power to orchestrate the Soviet approach of active measures throughout the current DIME environment.

Today, active measures are interwoven across all elements of national power, but what is most important to underscore is how they are orchestrated by the authoritarian regime to be mutually supporting. The authoritarian regime’s emphasis and ability to orchestrate the critical

³⁹ Chim, “Russia’s Digital Awakening,” 8.

⁴⁰ Lipman, Putin's Sovereign Democracy. Carnegie Moscow Center.

⁴¹ Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of The United States of America: Sharpening the American Military’s Competitive Edge, Department of Defense, Washington, D.C. 2018, p. 4.

capability of active measures has facilitated Russia's ability to maintain and improve upon "its position as a great power, despite its relative material weakness, through its superior use of information as a tool of asymmetric advantage."⁴² These information operations during the Soviet era were broad in nature and consumed significantly more resources than what is required of Russia today.⁴³ At the turn of the century, Russian leadership was quick to recognize how the modernization of technology and global connectivity could be utilized to increase their active measure to regain its status as a global power following the Soviet collapse.⁴⁴

When considering Russia today, numerous scholars identify that "information-and disinformation- activities form a central pillar of Moscow's approach to statecraft, influence, and conflict and have been a staple of Russian operations."⁴⁵ The same scholars claim Russia has been a leader within this operational environment since at least the Cold War, and is "arguably the most advanced nation in relation to information warfare, particularly in its use of disinformation."⁴⁶ It can be argued that Russia has been able to achieve these strategic goals, and become a global leader within this operational environment because of the authoritarian leaders' ability to direct efforts in the weaponizing of technology.

Considering current modern capabilities, which is the distinguishing factor concerning the strategy of active measures; Russia's use of active measures in support of its elements of national power has arguably changed both the nature and character of war. Valery Gerasimov argues that "modern conflicts no longer have concrete beginnings and ends,"⁴⁷ which essentially defines a hybrid war, Phase 0 operations, or new generation warfare, because information

⁴² Allen and Moore, "21st Century Political Warfare," 59.

⁴³ Chim, "Russia's Digital Awakening," 7.

⁴⁴ Chim, "Russia's Digital Awakening," 7.

⁴⁵ M. Hammond-Errey, "Understanding and Assessing Information Influence and Foreign Interference." *Journal of Information Warfare* 2019. 18.1: 1-22. Pg11. <https://search-proquest-com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/2308003302?accountid=14746>.

⁴⁶ Hammond-Errey, "Understanding and Assessing Information Influence and Foreign Interference." 11.

⁴⁷ Chim, "Russia's Digital Awakening," 8.

operations have been weaponized in such a way that they can be employed “anywhere on the spectrum of war and peace”⁴⁸ and they provide the asymmetric advantage that bends the enemy’s will without the violent nature of war, that was once needed to impose a political will. The modern capabilities have increased the tempo, speed, and location in which steady-state competition is fought, thereby fundamentally changing the parameters of warfare. The evidence of this change can be exemplified by the consideration and possible addition of a new phasing construct in military planning.

The two primary pathfinders and supporters of President Putin’s strategy were Vladislav Surkov, his political and or ideologist-strategic advisor, and Valery Gerasimov, the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces. These two men have been instrumental in attaining Russia’s current dominant status,⁴⁹ and their “fondness for misdirection and deception is central to Russia’s cyber-strategy of causing widespread confusion about Russia’s intentions and pervasive uncertainty about what is fact or fiction.”⁵⁰ This information strategy mirrors the concepts of active measures and directly supports all other elements of national power.

Vladislav Surkov has been instrumental in messaging political false narratives on behalf of authoritarian rule, by delaying other sovereign nations and the people within Russia’s own borders, from clearly understanding the political environment in which Russia truly intended to operate. Vladislav Surkov “also developed modern Kremlin policies of co-opting, marginalizing, and manipulating political opponents wherein the Russian government did not shut down opposition media outlets but instead gained control of the entire media cycle and pushed opposition groups to the margins, effectively disarming them but maintaining plausible

⁴⁸ Hammond-Errey, "Understanding and Assessing Information Influence and Foreign Interference," 3.

⁴⁹ Chim, “Russia’s Digital Awakening,” 7-8.

⁵⁰ Chim, “Russia’s Digital Awakening,” 8.

deniability.”⁵¹ The integration of the elements of power is seen in Valery Gerasimov’s military actions.

Valery Gerasimov identified the weak state of his kinetic capabilities within the military and the advantage a military can gain from deception, while an opponent operates with uncertainty, or its potential gains while an enemy has weakened their tangible and intangible capabilities by fighting other wars in which Russia shapes and or antagonizes. Valery Gerasimov’s recognition of how important ‘non-military measures’ were in achieving strategic victories were exemplified by his execution of operations at a 4:1 ratio of non-military operations over military operations.⁵²

The Diplomatic Component

Diplomacy is the forward arm of Russia’s political warfare that is centered around a strategy of active measures. Diplomacy and information operations will be involved in every active measure employed, whether in a supporting role or as the principle focus. The distinguishing factor for Russia is the way they actively create disinformation or craft negative world events to support their diplomacy. Diplomacy in the simplest terms is a country’s ability to manage and influence its relations throughout the globe in order to advance its interest. Russia places significant blame on U.S. diplomacy for its inability to regain global influence and great power status; and Russia is actively taking action across the DIME spectrum to recover land and legitimacy. If it is accepted that nuclear power is the anchor for Russia’s diplomatic legitimacy and credibility, and that information, military, and economics reinforce diplomacy to increase national power; one must look more specifically at what Russia has done to protect its

⁵¹ Chim, “Russia’s Digital Awakening,” 8.

⁵² Hammond-Errey, "Understanding and Assessing Information Influence and Foreign Interference," 12.

weaknesses through the use of diplomacy in modern times, to limit or negate the influence of the United States.

One of Russia's greatest strengths and greatest weaknesses impacting its diplomacy is the country's geographical location. Russia's geographic location is diplomatically significant because "Russia's unique geopolitical position links it with most of the important regions of the eastern hemisphere, including Western, Central, Eastern and Southern Europe, the oil-rich Middle East, resource-rich central Asia and the Vast Asia-Pacific markets."⁵³ Russia's geographic location and the way in which that location impacts its management of DIME is significant when understanding Russia's warring past and historic threats. These threats range from Western Europe, Northeast Asia, and NATO as well as their recent engagements in Afghanistan, Ukraine, Crimea, and Syria. These geographic and geopolitical relationships are also significant in that Russia is essentially a "bridge-state"⁵⁴ that may now serve as a medium for trade, cultures, and diplomacy. Russia has recognized its geopolitical position and climbed to a position of power and leverage through its geographical location and geopolitical partnerships.

Recognizing the countries within the European Union and NATO as its most immediate threat, considering location, and most reoccurring threat considering history, Russia began forging partnerships with the most powerful among the EU. Toward the end of the twentieth-century Russia developed "privileged relations with Germany and France as a way of integrating into the EU and eventually creating a new balance of power," and at the turn of the century under President Putin's leadership, "Britain was added to Russia's privileged partners."⁵⁵ Much of these privileged partnerships stem from the trade of Russia's natural gas and resources, which

⁵³ Irina Viktorovna Isakova, *Russian Governance in the Twenty-First Century: Geo-Strategy, Geopolitics and Governance*, London, New York: Frank Cass, 2005, 18-19.

⁵⁴ Isakova. *Russian Governance in the Twenty-First Century*, 18.

⁵⁵ Isakova. *Russian Governance in the Twenty-First Century*, 18-19.

provide Russia with significant economic influence, thereby diplomatic influence. These strategic diplomatic relationships have given Russia leverage through diplomacy, as seen through its survival through economic sanctions and involvement in NATO at the turn of the century. Despite the fact that NATO was not publicly supported in Russia, “Russian interests in cooperation with NATO was and is based on economic, political, and military considerations.”⁵⁶ Russia’s ability to integrate into and influence NATO decision makers gives credit to their status as a peer competitor and enables more nefarious activities throughout other elements of national power. After Russia’s support of anti-terrorist invasion into Afghanistan post the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Russia’s increased involvement in NATO was heavily supported by U.S. diplomats, although not by the military, and Russia was ultimately given even greater diplomatic influence by building upon the NATO-Rome Declaration into the ‘NATO- Russia Council of 20’.

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The implication of Russia’s actions at the turn of the century is that modern Russia took significant active measures in the beginning of the twenty-first century to align with the U.S. and Western ways, creating deception and thereby negating any need for the United States to employ strong methods of deterrence. However, much like the United States and China, the U.S. and Russia are in a constant fight for balance of power, despite evidence of military or economic cooperation. A primary means in which Russia is effective diplomatically against the United States is by giving in areas that cost them little, such as supporting the fight against terrorism specific to Afghanistan, while still aligning with U.S. adversaries for geopolitical and geo-economic advantages with countries such as China, North Korea, Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Iraq, or Syria.

⁵⁶ Isakova, *Russian Governance in the Twenty-First Century*, 39.

⁵⁷ Isakova, *Russian Governance in the Twenty-First Century*, 42-43.

These perplexing relationships that are ongoing with Russia today, should not be a surprise when considering how the U.S.- Russia relationship was strengthening in September 2001, only to have the “Russian Duma express full support for the decision of Russia’s military-political leadership to renew military-technical cooperation with Iran,” despite the United States recently “criticizing Iran and calling it a country of terrorist.”⁵⁸ Much of these complex Russian relationships are orchestrated by Russia’s ability to fully integrate DIME and make declarations that gain their people’s support while limiting the impact of foreign powers through the Duma’s political statements, diplomatic relationships, or information operations that support their long-term strategy.

The Information Component

Russia understands that gaining an asymmetric advantage through information operations is not always a predictable endeavor. Distinguishing factors in the way Russia attempts to approach this domain is the way they attempt to gain asymmetric advantage by leveraging significant technology, infrastructure, and manpower, to developing and manipulating information and disinformation. One cannot predict how an adversary will respond to information. However, as there are actions and reactions, there are position changes in the operational environment, and sometimes these changes are occurring without the opponent understanding that they have entered into the conflict. Once the information operations have positioned the opponent in such a manner that Russia has the asymmetric advantage, the enemy may have found themselves in such a vulnerable state they cannot contest. The use of active measures within the information domain allows Russia to maneuver its opponent without force, and “the player on the losing end knows that he or she will lose, perhaps in a finite number of

⁵⁸ H. Belopolsky, *Russia and the Challengers: Russian Alignment with China, Iran and Iraq in the Unipolar Era*, St Antony’s Series, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, 45.

moves. That is the essence of having the most advantageous position and winning without fighting.”⁵⁹ What has been referred to in synonymous terms surrounding the nomenclature for information operations, “conflict in Phase 0 centers around position, which Jacqueline Deal describes as disposition of power so favorable that the use of military force is unnecessary to secure your interest.”⁶⁰

The Soviet Union and modern Russia have achieved these strategic aims through information operations by use of reflexive control. Timothy Thomas wrote in the *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* that reflexive theory has been studied in Russia for more than 40 years, and is “defined as a means of conveying to a partner or an opponent specially prepared information to incline him to voluntarily make the predetermined decision desired by the initiator of the action.”⁶¹ The definition of reflexive control is very similar to the definition of diplomacy, but what is significant about reflexive control in this context is the emphasis that Russia has placed on this approach and the manner in which they employ this critical capability. Russia’s method and use of reflexive control is not new, but the means in which they can employ the strategy has drastically changed with technology, giving them greater impacts with less expenditure of resources. This Soviet linkage to “reflexive Control is a crucial component of the Russian approach to disinformation and broader information operations; hence it is so important to understand this in relation to tactics as well as timeliness, specificity, and targeting.”⁶²

A critical component of information management is the authoritarian regime’s ability to manage inbound and outbound information by controlling the media, as well as controlling all

⁵⁹ R. Bebber, "Information War and Rethinking Phase 0." *Journal of Information Warfare* 15 (2) 2016: 39-52. p 46. <https://search-proquest-com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/1968021878?accountid=14746>.

⁶⁰ Bebber, "Information War and Rethinking Phase 0." 46.

⁶¹ Timothy Thomas, "Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17. (2004), 237-256, 237.

⁶² Hammond-Errey, "Understanding and Assessing Information Influence and Foreign Interference," 7.

privatized lines of communication. In 1995 Russia implemented the System for Operative-Investigative Activities (SORM), which was significantly advanced in its legalized monitoring of private communications surveillance since 1995.⁶³ This system has continued to increase in capacity and capability; “as of 2017, SORM-3 allows for the following: monitoring phone calls, email traffic, web browsing, IP addresses, all credit card transactions, monitoring all social networking sites and requiring them to install the black box tracking systems, user phone numbers, email addresses, and has the ability to perform deep packet inspection (DPI).”⁶⁴ This SORM system is critically important for Russia’s ability to control the narrative, assess opinions within and outside Russian borders, measure effectiveness of messaging, and recognize when Russia has achieved the appropriate level of advantage. The SORM system is also significant in identifying bad actors within Russia’s borders, and using blackmail to further the strategic agenda.

Russia has increasingly leveraged organized crime and individuals with pending criminal charges that Russia would blackmail, in exchange for their participation as tacticians within Russia’s information operations. This increase is exemplified by the fact that “Putin’s Russia appears to have put substantial effort into developing cadres of state hackers, often co-opted from the ranks of the criminal underground,” and according to “Fireeye cyber threat analyst Jonathan Wrolstad, Russia has had a ‘symbiotic relationship’ with organized cybercrime.”⁶⁵ The use of the non-government affiliated groups becomes evident following Russia’s 2007 cyberattacks on Estonia in 2007; when “the attackers, which included organized crime and private hacking groups, used botnets worldwide inflicting distributed denial of service (DDoS)

⁶³ Chim, “Russia’s Digital Awakening.” 9.

⁶⁴ Nathalie Marechal, “Networked Authoritarianism and the Geopolitics of Information: Understanding Russian Internet Policy,” *Media and Communications* 5, no 1, (2017): 29-41, 33.

⁶⁵ Chim, “Russia’s Digital Awakening.” 11.

attacks to overwhelm Estonian servers, including government organizations, banks, political parties and most news media websites.”⁶⁶

What is more significant than the use of non-government actors was the unified messaging throughout the authoritarian regime, and the managing of all elements of power that enabled the tacticians to meet their cyber-information objectives. These objectives were achieved due to the tailored disinformation messages that the political elites effectively communicated to a diverse demographic of interested listeners. While Russia provided disinformation regarding its involvement of the attacks on Estonia, and “although the attacks on Estonia cannot be positively attributed to Russian state actors, their timing, and the effects they generated, suggested they were part of a larger, coordinated information operations campaign by the Kremlin employing multiple tools of influence.”⁶⁷ Russia’s future endeavors will show a significant pattern of political deniability for the sake of achieving foreign and domestic support or providing disinformation until achieving a position of asymmetric advantage.

Estonia should be viewed as a proof-of-concept that is seen employed upon other border states when considering “the context of the Federation’s long-term objectives of preserving its influence in its near abroad and safeguarding the interests of Russian minority populations along its borders.”⁶⁸ Although the cyber-attacks did not result in tangible gains for Russia, it did highlight the advantage of leveraging technology for the employment of active measures in that it allowed Russia to maneuver in multiple domains, without physical presence until creating an exploitable gap. Information Operations through technology and diplomacy, have allowed

⁶⁶ Chim, “Russia’s Digital Awakening,” 11.

⁶⁷ Michael Connell and Sarah Vogler, “Russia’s Approach to Cyber Warfare,” Occasional Paper Arlington, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, March 2017, 14.

⁶⁸ Connell and Vogler, “Russia’s Approach to Cyber Warfare,” 15.

Russia to gain leverage and conduct maneuver warfare, without the violence typically associated with the nature of war.

Russian information and disinformation campaigns serve the purpose of support internally and legitimacy externally, and often gaining legitimacy externally involves providing enough disinformation to discredit legitimate sources. Examples of disinformation campaigns are plentiful, as exemplified by the shutdown of flight MH17, the 2016 presidential election and the hundred year old strategy of continued escalation of racial tensions within the U.S. All of these examples lack outright use of physical force or presence, and have manipulated global influence with limited resources.

In 2014, Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 was downed, and the world speculated that Russia was responsible.⁶⁹ However, numerous researchers indicate that Russia's ability to conduct timely and targeted messaging through cyber and diplomatic channels, as well as its use of intimidation methods from associate groups connected with the government, allowed it to convince 97% of its population it was not involved. Russia produced enough illegitimate reporting or disinformation that outside authorities were unwilling to pursue holding Russia accountable.⁷⁰ This implies that Russia does not need to be innocent to prevent the international community from holding them responsible. It proves that active measures of deception within the information realm only need to create enough doubt amongst populations to be an effective offensive or defensive tool. In the case of MH17, active measures were used as a defense. The Russian active measures employed during the 2016 U.S. presidential elections are an example of offensive action, in which Russia employed active measures to create doubt in the elections legitimacy, resulting in advantage for Russia.

⁶⁹ Hammond-Errey, "Understanding and Assessing Information Influence and Foreign Interference." 14.

⁷⁰ Hammond-Errey, "Understanding and Assessing Information Influence and Foreign Interference." 14.

There is clear evidence that Russia employed active measures during the 2016, despite the ongoing partisan debates. Whether or not Russia was involved in tampering with the 2016 elections is less important than the narrative created resulting in political descent within the United States. Even if Russia did not meddle, they would have likely continued to fuel the political and domestic arguments in an effort to discredit political leaders and the democratic process. Although Russia does capitalize on democracy's self-induced uncertainties, evidence of Russia's involvement in the 2016 U.S. election is directly tied to the "Russian Internet Research Agency".⁷¹ This organization is "based out of a nondescript office complex in St. Petersburg with several hundred employees tasked with waging "information war" – spreading disparate and false narratives about a multitude of political and social issues around the world to blur the line between truth and falsehood for the benefit of the Kremlin."⁷² This organization is crafting information with current and future implications, as investigators have already found "social media accounts linked to the Internet Research Agency (IRA), the Kremlin-linked company behind an influence campaign that targeted the 2016 elections, have indeed already begun their digital campaign to interfere in the 2020 presidential election."⁷³

These Russian active measures within the U.S. elections created significant political friction domestically and internationally for the United States. Russia's leverage of technology within the information warfare domain presented doubt in regard to the legitimacy of the U.S. president and the democratic process in which he was elected. Russia interference prior to the election and instigating propaganda following the election inserted doubt as to whether or not Donald Trump was the legitimate democratically elected president. The greatest achievement

⁷¹ Chim, "Russia's Digital Awakening," 13.

⁷² Chim, "Russia's Digital Awakening," 13.

⁷³ Young Mie Kim, "New Evidence Shows How Russia's Election Interference Has Gotten More Brazen," *Brennan Center For Justice*, March 5, 2020. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/new-evidence-shows-how-russias-election-interference-has-gotten-more>

for Russia was undermining the legitimacy of democracy in the United States. Russia benefits by the United States being internally focused, and the international community questioning its legitimacy. The deliberate use of active measures as critical capability is made clear when “U.S. officials said that a stream of intelligence from sources inside the Russian government indicates that Putin and his lieutenants regard the 2016 “active measures” campaign — as the Russians describe such covert propaganda operations — as a resounding, if incomplete, success.”⁷⁴ Those officials go on to claim that “the Kremlin believes it got a staggering return on an operation that by some estimates cost less than \$500,000 to execute and was organized around two main objectives — destabilizing U.S. democracy and preventing Hillary Clinton, who is despised by Putin, from reaching the White House.”⁷⁵

Russia’s innovation from its early recognition of technological capabilities in the late 1990s to today shows a “clear adjustment of traditional Soviet intelligence strategy and tradecraft to new technology.”⁷⁶ This is clear when examining the active measures employed by the Soviet Union during the Great Depression and the Civil Rights movement in comparison with examples of Russia’s involvement in antagonizing racial tension today. Today Russia’s IRA has antagonized racial tension through cyber centric information operations, the same way that Russian political leaders conduct information operations, and that is by timely and targeted messaging to specific demographics. The IRA used targeting tools in order to message Americans based on “race, gender, age, sexual orientation, political affiliation and interest;” while placing significant emphasis on racial tensions, specifically the Black Lives Matter

⁷⁴ Greg Miller, Greg Jaffe, and Philip Rucker, “Doubting the intelligence, Trump Pursues Putin and Leaves Russian Threat Unchecked,” *The Denver Post*, December 14, 2017, <https://www.denverpost.com/2017/12/14/trump-pursues-putin>.

⁷⁵ Miller, Jaffe, and Rucker, “Doubting the intelligence.”

⁷⁶ Chim, “Russia’s Digital Awakening,” 13.

movement.⁷⁷ The IRA used every means of social media to target specific audiences using hashtags such as #MAGA (Make America Great Again), handles such as @blackmatterus, pages called BlackMattersUS that would sponsor gatherings, and advertisements promoting slogans implying Hilary only cares about votes, not black lives.⁷⁸ It has and can still be argued, that the purpose of inciting racial conflict in an effort to support the Trump election, was Trump's stance against the United Nations (UN) & NATO organizations and how that political and diplomatic turmoil could benefit Russia.

The Military Component

When the UN urged Russia to remove forces from the Crimea in 2018,⁷⁹ the UN's legitimacy was being questioned publicly by the United States, its largest financial contributor, thereby providing greater credibility to Russia's narrative. There are clear similarities with Eastern Ukraine, and the United Nation's inability to establish a permanent ceasefire or protect the sovereignty of a member of the UN. The effectiveness of Russia's 'active measures', stems from questions and doubts about legitimacy. Questions that could be asked or inflamed by information operations include whether or not the UN is a legitimate organization, whether these regions belong to Russia, whether Russia is truly acting on behalf of their people within border states, and how did Russia influence ongoing impeachment hearings regarding President Trump withholding of financial support from Ukraine, and are the forces in Crimea or Ukraine Russian? The advantage of Russian active measures in the technology age is that Russia can maneuver

⁷⁷ April Glaser, "Russian Trolls Were Obsessed With Black Lives Matter," *Slate Magazine*, Slate, May 11, 2018. <https://slate.com/technology/2018/05/russian-trolls-are-obsessed-with-black-lives-matter.html>.

⁷⁸ Philip N. Howard, Bharath Ganesh, and Dimitra Liotsiou, "The IRA, Social Media and Political Polarization in the United States, 2012-2018," Computational Propaganda Research Project, University of Oxford. <https://comprop.oii.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/93/2018/12/The-IRA-Social-Media-and-Political-Polarization.pdf>.

⁷⁹ "General Assembly Adopts Resolution Urging Russian Federation to Withdraw Its Armed Forces from Crimea, Expressing Grave Concern about Rising Military Presence," *Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*, General Assembly, Seventy-Third Session, 56th Meeting, United Nations. December 17, 2018. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/ga12108.doc.htm>.

within all domains with more rapidity, creating more gaps to exploit, in order to achieve an endstate without the conventional employment of military forces. However, Russia has been very successful at integrating diplomacy and information operations to support its military forces, even while denying its activity, which is why it has subscribed to Non-Linear Warfare and the conduct of non-military operations with a ratio of 4:1.⁸⁰

Russia's support of its military through information operations may appear to be a new tactic developed to support the actions in Crimea, Ukraine, and Syria; however, it directly correlates to Soviet active measures used in the past. This has been an incredibly effective approach to sustaining power and influence for a country that has undergone massive swings in political influence and reform, economic status, and military strength and status. Special Report Number 88, which was written by the State Department in 1981 and approved for release by the CIA in 2006, is filled with case studies examining the Soviet Union's use of front groups. These case studies show evidence in El Salvador where they created leftist insurgencies, or in Europe, where the Soviets countered the NATO response to a Soviet military build-up by conducting successful information campaigns against the development of a NATO-Threat Nuclear Force (TNF).⁸¹

Russia's diplomatically influenced military effort to counter U.S. influence in Eurasia is reflected in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The SCO was founded in 2001, initially consisting of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan and is considered a counter to U.S. and NATO influence in Asia.⁸² This organization has since

⁸⁰ Hammond-Errey. "Understanding and Assessing Information Influence and Foreign Interference." 12.

⁸¹ "Soviet 'Active Measures' Forgery, Disinformation, Political Operations," Special Report 88, United States Department of Public Affairs, October, 1981.

⁸² Felix K. Chang, "Organization of Rivals: Limits of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," Foreign Policy Research Institute, Asia Program, September 27, 2018. <https://www.fpri.org/article/2018/09/organization-of-rivals-limits-of-the-shanghai-cooperation-organization/>

expanded and has even incorporated the rival countries of India and Pakistan in their large scale military exercises that are aimed at “protecting the strategic Central Asia region.”⁸³ Russia has leveraged the militarily focused, diplomatically credible, organization to achieve strategic interest against the U.S. and NATO forces; as publicly witnesses when SCO announced the desire for the U.S. to set a timetable for withdrawal of U.S. forces from the region, resulting in Uzbekistan ordering the American troops out of its Karshi-Khanabad Air Base.⁸⁴

Russia has always been cautious about NATO countries on its borders, and ultimately the only way to counter NATO’s encroachment on the border is prevent countries from gaining access to NATO, or take territory by force. Considerations amongst NATO to allow new members includes, “resolution of border and minority rights disputes” and consideration of the pending members “strategic risks and benefits.”⁸⁵ Russia has actively created disputes and increased strategic risks of NATO partnering with border states or countries of strategic interest to Russia. Russia has utilized active measures to prevent neighboring countries from entering NATO by utilizing disinformation with proxy and conventional military forces. There is significant evidence of this when examining the recent conflicts between Russia and states that were previously part of the Soviet Union.

Russia’s invasion of Georgia, a pro-western state that provided troop support to the United States post 9/11 and was seeking NATO membership, was a direct representation of an active measure taken by Russia to maintain buffer space and discredit NATO along with the United States.⁸⁶ Mark Galeotti, a senior non-resident fellow at the Institute of International

⁸³ Press TV, “Russia, China, SCO member states start large-scale drills.” *Press TV*, September 17, 2019. <https://www.presstv.com/Detail/2019/09/17/606382/Russia-china-sco-shanghai-cooperation-military-drill>

⁸⁴ Chang, “Organization of Rivals: Limits of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.”

⁸⁵ “NATO Expansion: The Criteria Conundrum.” *IISS, Strategic Comments*, No. 4. March 4, 1995. Taylor & Francis Dec 20, 2006. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1356788950142?scroll=top&needAccess=true>.

⁸⁶ Sarah Pruitt, “How a Five-Day War With Georgia Allowed Russia to Reassert Its Military Might,” *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, August 8, 2018. <https://www.history.com/news/russia-georgia-war-military-nato>.

Relations Prague and Russian expert, claims “the Russians built up their plans, built up their forces, and they ensured that their local proxies in South Ossetia needed Georgians enough, knowing that Sakaashvili....would rise to the bait.” This shows that Russia had been setting conditions through active measures until the asymmetric advantage was in their favor. The asymmetric advantage in this case was not their military superiority. Although they had the clear military advantage, it was the political and diplomatic environment that Russia capitalized on. Russia insisted that had Georgia had not attacked South Ossetia, that Russia would not have invaded Georgia, and that Moscow was not preparing for such an invasion; however, according to Russian military sources, “for months or longer, Moscow was mobilizing forces as well as moving heavy equipment and munitions into forward position.”⁸⁷

The invasion of Georgia served multiple purposes for Russia. For one, it allowed the conventional forces to exercise their forces and gain pride and confidence after they were an organization of such little expectation less than a decade earlier. It also prevented Georgia from becoming a NATO member. Ten years after the 2008 war, Russia continues to emphasize that “NATO is encroaching on and surrounding Russia; and if Georgia becomes a member, this could provoke a terrible conflict.”⁸⁸ Arguably the most significant result of the invasion is that it highlighted concerns of the legitimacy of partnerships with western powers, and as Mark Galeotti highlights, “no one was willing to go to war for Georgia.”⁸⁹ In today’s diplomatic environment, the lack of western response to Russia’s actions discredits the United States and the legitimacy of their partnership. These military actions create significant messaging for Russia and their allies, to maintain their status within great power competition. Countries like Japan

⁸⁷ Pavel Felgenhauer, “Russia Threatens a Renewed War in Georgia to Prevent NATO Enlargement.”

⁸⁸ Felgenhauer, “Russia Threatens a Renewed War in Georgia to Prevent NATO Enlargement.”

⁸⁹ Pruitt, “How a Five-Day War With Georgia Allowed Russia to Reassert Its Military Might.”

question if the U.S. will come to their support if a country like China or Russia were to attempt to regain Japanese territory that the Soviets thought was owed to them post World War II.

This use of military force from Russia today, or the threat thereof, has many of the same strategic goals that Stalin had in his grand strategy. Stalin relied on proxies and partnerships to spread communism and increase his buffer zone in eastern Europe by aligning with Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary.⁹⁰ Stalin went on to disperse the United States focus from Europe to the far east by partnering with China and North Korea, resulting in one-third of the world's population being under communist rule,⁹¹ leading the United States into a policy of containment and decades of war in Korea and Vietnam as communism continued to spread. We see much of this same strategy employed today under Vladimir Putin's leadership, by employing his military forces coupled with proxies and private military contractors, against border states of strategic value and in support of strategic partners taking on western powers. Putin's use of these privatized contractors, in conjunction with information operations and diplomacy, are consistent with an active measures strategy.

Russia's involvement in Crimea and Ukraine are modern day examples of Russian active measures. Russia has learned from its cyber and diplomatic efforts in Estonia, as well as Russia's military efforts and shortfalls in Georgia. Russia successfully utilized all elements of national power with a more apparent emphasis on leveraging special operations and privatized military contractors to gain further advantage in the information realm, and to balance their military weaknesses. Russia denied their actions in Crimea and Ukraine early on; however, "in both cases, Russia's state-sponsored information outlets purposefully called the anti-Kyiv and pro-Russia militants "volunteers" (*dobrovotsi*) or a "People's Militia" (*Narodnoye Opolcheniye*)

⁹⁰ Pechatnov, "The Soviet Union and The World," 110.

⁹¹ Pechatnov, "The Soviet Union and The World," 111.

to conceal the real actors Moscow was using in the theater as proxy forces.”⁹² Russia is the first country to combine cyberattacks and military force, and their ability to “deny and deflect accusations of involvement” has been crucial to their success.⁹³ While controlling diplomatic issues by controlling the information surrounding action in Crimea, Russian SOF forces had already been inserted via dock landing craft *Nikolay Filchenkov*⁹⁴, a Black Sea Fleet asset, and secured key objectives. The rapid success in which Russia was able to annex Crimea was credited to maskirovka, which is doctrinal deception or in many ways synonymous with active measures. Russia’s ability to integrate active measures was successfully managed across the DIME, with regular, specialized, and privatized forces “merging elements of linear, small and cyber/information war.”⁹⁵

These privatized forces have been essential in the active measure approach, by providing Russia the opportunity to disavow its association with military actions. One way in which Russia has overcome its conventional military’s shortcomings while simultaneously increasing its ability to disassociate from the military actions is by use of Privatized Military Corporations (PMC). Since Russia’s renewed grand strategy there has been a significant increase in their utility and size of employment for internal and external strategic goals. While the United States uses private contractors to offset support requirements, Russia will use PMCs for a myriad of tasks to include offensive operations in which Russia denies involvement. Russian contracted forces were able to fulfill a myriad of tasks and capabilities ranging from the support of SOF to

⁹² Sergey Sukhankin, “Unleashing the PMCs and Irregulars in Ukraine: Crimea and Donbas,” *Jamestown*, September 3, 2019. <https://jamestown.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Paper-4-Irregulars-in-Ukraine-2.pdf?x29008>.

⁹³ Chim, “Russia’s Digital Awakening,” 13.

⁹⁴ Sukhankin, “Unleashing the PMCs and Irregulars in Ukraine: Crimea and Donbas.”

⁹⁵ Sukhankin, “Unleashing the PMCs and Irregulars in Ukraine: Crimea and Donbas.”

frontal assaults,⁹⁶ and fulfilled significant strategic responsibilities, as “Russian private military companies [made up] the core of the Russian aggression in Donbas... and later, these same elements were transferred to Syria.”⁹⁷ The use of privatized military contractors in conjunction with other elements of power provides Russia with the ability to disassociate itself with the activities of the private contractors, which ultimately restricts response options for western or NATO countries.

Even when countries do eventually intervene, Russia has managed to position itself in such a way as to gain advantage without needing to conventionally confront other global powers. Prior to the invasion of Crimea and Ukraine, Russia was able to further dissuade others from responding in force through active measures, as displayed by Putin ordering “the increased operational readiness of Russian strategic nuclear forces.”⁹⁸ The credibility of Russia’s nuclear capability allows Russia to maneuver below the level of conflict to achieve strategic objectives. When confronted by other nations Russian diplomacy has highlighted the ability to dissuade outside involvement or influence prior to achieving Russia’s strategic endstate, thereby providing Russia greater power status across the globe and within its own borders. Polling has shown that Russia’s public opinion of Putin increased roughly 25% following the annexation of Crimea.⁹⁹ This support on the home front is of equal significance to an authoritarian regime, as it provides leverage internally and internationally.

The Economic Component

⁹⁶ Sukhankin, “Unleashing the PMCs and Irregulars in Ukraine: Crimea and Donbas.”

⁹⁷ Sukhankin, “Unleashing the PMCs and Irregulars in Ukraine: Crimea and Donbas.”

⁹⁸ Marek Menkiszak, “Russia’s Minsk Dilemma,” *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs*, 2017, no. 4, 73.

⁹⁹ Menkiszak, “Russia’s Minsk Dilemma”, 74.

Nations frequently use economic prosperity as a tool for garnering domestic support. The United States, and some European allies have attempted to weaken the Russia economy by enforcing sanctions as a means of maintaining global order after Russia's actions in near abroad countries such as Crimea and Ukraine. Russian sanctions and economics are such closely associated terms that Russia has cast a wide net of active measures to hedge against sanctions to prevent adversarial induced economic turmoil.

Much credit to Russia's economic turmoil is given to sanctions, and while sanctions have played a small factor, it is the collective economic downturn that is most responsible the economic turmoil Russia is faced with. The effect on Russia's GDP as a result of sanctions is estimated to result in a loss between 1% and 1.5%¹⁰⁰, in the undefined short-term, which is approximately "3.3 times lower than the estimated effects of oil pricing".¹⁰¹ It can be argued that due to 'active measures' taken by Russia, sanctions have helped place blame of domestic struggles and Russian poverty on the U.S., and had the sanctions not been employed the blame could have been associated with Putin's government. Studies on the economic turmoil in Russia "highlighted fundamental problems in Russia's economy, including the economy's dependence on the production and export of oil and gas, as well as the need for reform in a number of areas, including governance (including the need to address corruption), regulation, privatization, competition, the banking sector, and utility pricing."¹⁰² Due to outside influences on the economy, President Putin has been able to claim that the sanctions are "severely harmful" to

¹⁰⁰ "Russian Federation: 2015 Article IV Consultation-Press Release; And Staff Report." International Monetary Fund, August 2015: 5. <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2015/cr15211>.

¹⁰¹ E. Gurvich and I. Prilepskiy, "The Impact of Financial Sanctions On The Russian Economy," *Russian Journal of Economics* (November 30, 2015): 359-385. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ruje.2016.02.002>

¹⁰² Rebecca Nelson, "U.S. Sanctions and Russia's Economy," Congressional Research Service, Feb 17, 2017: 3-4.

Russia, especially concerning the international financial market restrictions.¹⁰³ This displaced accountability has led to continued support of President Putin, and an increased or continued disdain of the west; as expressed by a poll that shows “a third of Russians say that Western sanctions are causing the most harm to their economy.”¹⁰⁴

Beyond the domestic propaganda oriented active measures, Vladimir Putin receives high domestic support for confidence in his handling of international affairs¹⁰⁵, which he has used to hedge his economic influence. Russia has managed to incorporate their authoritarian led elements of national power into business partnerships in volatile regions, while stabilizing or hedging with regional financial powers such as China, Iran, India, and Brazil. The three critical means by which Russia has integrated risk with stability, and their economy with other elements of power can be explained by examining partnerships relating to military arms trades, the Belt Road Initiative, and taking active measures to create a new globalized banking system that has created a de-dollarization effort to counter the risk of sanctions.

As Russia has modernized their military, they have risen to become the second largest arms producer in the world, and according to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute their top 10 companies arms sales were valued at over \$37 billion.¹⁰⁶ The exportation of armament is far from being able to compensate for the low cost of oil when considering Russia’s overall economy; however, these exports comprise a “significant share of total exports...making

¹⁰³ Nikolaus Blome, Kai Kiekmann, and Daniel Biskup, “Interview with Putin,” *Bild*, January 11, 2016. <https://www.businessinsider.com/vladimir-putin-interview-bild-obama-russia-us-2016-1>.

¹⁰⁴ Katie Simmons, Bruce Stokes, and Jacob Poushter, “2. Russian Public Opinion: Putin Praised, West Panned,” Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project, Pew Research Center, December 30, 2019. <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2015/06/10/2-russian-public-opinion-putin-praised-west-panned/>.

¹⁰⁵ Simmons, Stokes, and Poushter, “2. Russian Public Opinion: Putin Praised, West Panned.”

¹⁰⁶ “Global Arms Industry: US Companies Dominate the Top 100; Russian Arms Industry Moves to Second Place.” SIPRI, December 10, 2018. <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2018/global-arms-industry-us-companies-dominate-top-100-russian-arms-industry-moves-second-place>.

the industry one of the leading sectors through which Russia is integrated with the global economy.”¹⁰⁷ The integration into the global economy and increasing regional partnerships is the most significant aspect of Russia’s arms exports. Russia will be able to trade arms with countries that have tensions with the U.S. such as Iran, Syria, and China, or even exploit their weapons systems’ successful testing in countries like Syria, while selling to countries that would typically purchase from the U.S. such as Turkey, Egypt, or the Philippines.¹⁰⁸ The connection of arms sales should be examined very closely, as the ties are potentially much more significant than the baseline economic framework. These armament deals are arguably part of significantly larger deals as seen “in Syria, for the first time since the Cold War, Russia has deployed its forces far from home to quell a revolution and support a client regime.”¹⁰⁹ There are a significant number of countries with poor diplomatic relations with the U.S., such as Venezuela, Iran, India, Egypt, and China, that have traded Russian arms. As a theme throughout this paper, Russian interests permeate the surface of any activity, and when examining armament contracts analysts should anticipate that there is a larger incentive for Russia within the DIME, other than what is most obvious.

Russia is making a concerted effort to neutralize U.S. economic power and is having success through partnerships and alliances. The primary weapon that the U.S. has employed against Russia are economic sanctions. Many comparisons can be made between Russia and China, in regard to how the United States has employed sanctions against the two countries. The sanctions employed upon Russia and China have realigned the two powers, in an effort to

¹⁰⁷ Richard Connolly and Cecilie Sendstad, “Russia’s Role as an Arms Exporter The Strategic and Economic Importance of Arms Exports for Russia,” Russia and Eurasia Programme, March, 2017. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2017-03-20-russia-arms-exporter-connolly-sendstad.pdf>

¹⁰⁸ Connolly and Sendstad, “Russia’s Role as an Arms Exporter The Strategic and Economic Importance of Arms Exports for Russia.”

¹⁰⁹ “The New Game,” *The Economist Newspaper*, October 17, 2015. <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2015/10/17/the-new-game>.

counter the effectiveness of sanctions. According to Grzegorz Kuczyski, an expert in Russia and energy at the Warsaw Institute, an independent think tank that focuses on geopolitics, the “strengthening cooperation in the field of oil and gas confirms Vladimir Putin’s main foreign policy course, in which the strategic partnership or alliance with China is aimed at the U.S..”¹¹⁰ Analysts can also see Russia’s long-term partnership and cooperation in China’s Belt and Road Initiative. In an effort to increase trade and connect the two economies, “China invested 2.58 billion yuan (\$373 million) in building its part of a bridge over the Amur River to link Heihe in Heilongjiang province and Russian city of Blagoveshchensk, which could further facilitate transport of agriculture products from Russia to China.”¹¹¹

Russia is less concerned with China’s rise in power and more concerned with limiting the power of the U.S. to achieve Russia’s vision of globalized distribution of power or a multipolar structure.¹¹² With ongoing contention with the U.S., Russia has relied more and more on China, with China becoming Russia’s largest trading partner. Russia sees the Belt Road Initiative as a way to capture Chinese investment abroad, using their developmental projects to enhance the Russian economy, without allowing China to have diplomatic leverage on Russian policy.¹¹³ Russia has leveraged the relationship with China and the BRI project to circumvent sanctions, by utilizing financial institutions specifically developed by China to support BRI projects, as how Putin was able to complete the first liquified natural gas line above the Arctic Circle.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Amanda Lee, Tim Starks, Laurens Cerulus, and Mark Scott, “China, Russia Seek Closer Economic Ties to Counter U.S. Pressure as Xi Jinping Prepares to Meet Putin,” *POLITICO*, June 5, 2019. <https://www.politico.com/story/2019/06/05/china-russia-xi-jinping-vladimir-putin-1353546>.

¹¹¹ Lee, Starks, Cerulus, and Scott. “China, Russia Seek Closer Economic Ties to Counter U.S. Pressure as Xi Jinping Prepares to Meet Putin.”

¹¹² Feng Yujun, Alexander Gabuev, Paul Haenle, Ma Bin, and Dmitri Trenin, “The Belt and Road Initiative: Views from Washington, Moscow, and Beijing,” *Carnegie-Tsinghua Center For Global Policy*, April 8, 2019. <https://carnegietsinghua.org/2019/04/08/belt-and-road-initiative-views-from-washington-moscow-and-beijing-pub-78774>.

¹¹³ Feng, Gabuev, Haenle, Bin, and Trenin. “The Belt and Road Initiative.”

¹¹⁴ Feng, Gabuev, Haenle, Bin, and Trenin. “The Belt and Road Initiative.”

Financial institutions and networks are a clear example of how Russia has employed active measures against the United States. To neutralize sanctions, Russia, in conjunction with strategic partners, has created a new “world bank” and initiated a de-dollarization effort. In 1944 the Bretton Woods agreement established the U.S. dollar, linked to gold, as the global reserve currency and monetary standard.¹¹⁵ The premise of de-dollarization is to eliminate dependency on the dollar, and if Russia and its partners could achieve de-dollarization, it would be more difficult for the U.S. to leverage economic sanctions. Russia has taken active measures which consist of purchasing significant quantities of gold, partnering in new international banking institutions and trading in national currencies. Many countries, but especially Russia, which has quadrupled Russia’s gold reserves in the past decade,¹¹⁶ are buying gold to insulate themselves¹¹⁷ from the devaluation of the dollar, in the event they are successful in shifting global currency away from the U.S. dollar. Russia, supported by partner countries with the Association of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS), created the “System for the Transfer of Financial Messages (SFPS) — an alternative to the widely-used Swift system which facilitates interbank payments. SFPS was launched in 2017 as an attempt to sanctions-proof the Russian financial sector should the U.S. cut Russian banks’ access to Swift.”¹¹⁸ This financial infrastructure has obviously attracted adversaries such as Iran, but it also swayed India and countries within the European Union to begin banking in national currency as opposed to the

¹¹⁵ Richard Best, “How the U.S. Dollar Became the World's Reserve Currency.” *Investopedia*, (updated) March 20, 2020. <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/forex-currencies/092316/how-us-dollar-became-worlds-reserve-currency.asp>.

¹¹⁶ Andrey Biryukov, Rupert Rowling, and Yuliya Fedorinova, “Russia Is Dumping U.S. Dollars to Hoard Gold,” *Bloomberg*, March 29, 2019. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-03-29/russia-is-stocking-up-on-gold-as-putin-ditches-u-s-dollars>

¹¹⁷ Myra P. Saefong, “Why Russian And Chinese Central Banks Will Keep Buying Gold,” *MarketWatch*, September 13, 2019. <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/why-russian-and-chinese-central-banks-will-keep-buying-gold-2019-09-13>.

¹¹⁸ The Moscow Times. “Russia Says BRICS Nations Favor Idea of Common Payment System.” *The Moscow Times*. The Moscow Times, November 4, 2019. <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/11/14/putin-to-invite-china-and-india-to-join-anti-sanctions-bank-network-a68172>.

dollar to avoid the threat of sanction.¹¹⁹ By creating these new economic institutions and standards, Russia has increased its power and legitimacy within the financial and economic element of power. It has employed multiple tactics and positioned itself so that however the global environment reacts, it is prepared to support itself with gold reserves and critical partnerships, or it is poised to manage the new international bank to bank payment system.¹²⁰

Russia has also recently employed an active measure that is supported by diplomacy, information, and most outwardly economics in order to counter sanctions and create leverage across multiple elements of power. Sanctions employed by both the Obama and Trump administrations have mostly targeted “specific individuals and entities, as well as narrower restrictions against wider groups of Russian companies.”¹²¹ One individual of significance that was initially targeted by sanctions is Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska, who was sanctioned for maligned activities abroad to include interference in the 2016 U.S. elections, is a former high-ranking KGB and FSB officer, and is openly a representative of the Russian government with an active diplomatic visa.¹²² In 2018, President Trump lifted sanctions on Deripaska’s companies. The significance of these lifted sanctions is the events surrounding it, which include Deripaska hiring a lobbyist that was once Mitch McConnell’s staffer to have the sanctions lifted, followed by a \$200 million investment into an aluminum plant in McConnell’s state of Kentucky, and Deripaska being allowed to transfer of \$78 million worth of shares to his children.¹²³

Deripaska is an example of Russia’s mafia capitalism. These mafia capitalists are “well-organized crime syndicates, with links to governments and security services,” with significant

¹¹⁹ “Iran/Russia: Global De-dollarization Is Underway,” *Asia News Monitor* ; Bangkok, 25 November, 2019. <https://search-proquest-com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/2317314648?accountid=14746>.

¹²⁰ The Moscow Times. “Russia Says BRICS Nations Favor Idea of Common Payment System.”

¹²¹ U.S. Sanctions on Russia, Congressional Research Center, January 17, 2020. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R45415.pdf>

¹²² The Moscow Project, “Mitch McConnell, Russia Sanctions, and Rusal’s Investment in Kentucky,” July 31, 2019. <https://themoscowproject.org/dispatch/mitch-mcconnell-russia-sanctions-and-rusals-investment-in-kentucky/>

¹²³ The Moscow Project, “Mitch McConnell, Russia Sanctions, and Rusal’s Investment in Kentucky

sums of illicitly earned money in which they invest in safe areas¹²⁴, such as a Kentucky based aluminum companies. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Soviet infrastructure was destroyed and the country “opened up to robber bar and oligarchs who were able to take control of its wealth.”¹²⁵ Oligarchs like Derispaka, and the “new Mafia’s secretive operations are facilitated by electronic communications and the easy means of shifting large sums of cash rapidly around the world and thus keeping it hidden and unregulated.”¹²⁶ If these mafia capitalists are able to manipulate U.S. legislation for the removal of sanctions and recover billions of dollars by simply transferring the money to a family member, imagine how these mafia members are able to influence economics around the globe.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the guided democracy led by Vladimir Putin has implemented active measures over a long duration, resulting in the success and legitimacy of Russia within the competition for power. The Soviet Union was committed to employing active measures as a critical capability within its competition for power, and modern Russia has been able to improve upon on a legacy approach. Russia has leveraged technology, disregarded moral truths and ideologies, and shown that Russia is willing to create and develop environments that allow the twenty-first century authoritarian system to synchronize the approach of active measures throughout the DIME.

Today’s terminology of Phase 0 operations, New Generation Warfare, and Non-Linear War, to name a few, are not new concepts. While the previous terms may better incorporate

¹²⁴ John Green, “The New Mafia Capitalism: A new, totally unregulated and unscrupulous form of capitalism has emerged mired with dirty money from drug-dealing, pornography, and corruption,” *Morning Star*, January 4, 2017. <https://mronline.org/2018/01/05/the-new-mafia-capitalism/>

¹²⁵ Green, “The New Mafia Capitalism.”

¹²⁶ Green, “The New Mafia Capitalism.”

operational phasing constructs, technology, or a continuum of war and peace, active measures are at the core of each concept, because active measures are reflective of the political warfare approach that great power competitors face today.

The principle takeaways are that Russia does not seek global dominance and Russia does not necessarily believe it could achieve that status. However, Russia does desire a multipolar system in which it is considered a legitimate stake holder, responsible for Eurasia. Russia will continue to expand its borders, to include the near-border states that once comprised the Soviet Union. Russia will continue to use active measures across the DIME, with emphasis on information in order to identify an asymmetric advantage. Vladimir Putin and Russian diplomats will publicly state disinformation in support of other elements of national power. Russian leadership's integration of technology in the information domain appears to have outpaced the globe; however, they have leveraged unsustainable resources in this field such as criminal organizations. While the Russian military has modernized, it has been very dependent on active measures and privatized military, in order to achieve decisive victories before declarative violence. Most concerning is that Russia has gained significant traction in circumventing the economic sanctions which are the most significant deterrent in the U.S. arsenal short of force. Russia is likely to recognize that it has a vulnerable economy, so Russia has taken active measures to ensure equal economic risk for the U.S. by developing a banking system that is not tied to the U.S. dollar.

Russia is using the same doctrinal concept of 'active measures' that it used prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Through an analysis of Soviet history, Russia's current active measures are not surprising. Until Russia is offensively confronted, Russia will continue to increase the acceptable and or tolerable level of competition, further changing the parameters of

war. The strategy of active measure and the purpose of the approach is all about political warfare, but countering political warfare requires more than diplomacy and military. Offensive confrontation must be taken across all elements of national power and must be a collaborative international effort. A logical starting point would be a historical approach used by the United States to counter active measures that would collect, counter, and synchronize information, similar to the responsibilities of the decommissioned United States Information Agency.

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