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Russian policies on strategic missile defense and nuclear arms control: a realist interpretation

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by

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Over the past decade, Russia's reemergence on the international stage has been accompanied by a more aggressive foreign policy agenda. This confrontational Russian behavior lends itself to the conduct of a case study of the international relations theory known as realism. This thesis analyzes Russian decision making on strategic missile defense and nuclear arms control from a realist perspective. Russia's policies appear to be shaped by realist principles such as zero-sum calculations, the existence of an anarchic international system, and the continuing attempts to alter the balance of power to Moscow's advantage. Moscow holds that U.S.-led ballistic missile defense (BMD) efforts could not only neutralize Russia's nuclear deterrent, but upset strategic stability. Russia's nuclear weapons serve a critical deterrent role and fulfill political purposes, so Moscow is highly resistant to nuclear arms reductions beyond those specified in the 2010 New START Treaty. Russia even seeks to modernize and expand its nuclear arsenal, but it will be constrained by economic realities. Despite these constraints, Russia's great power ambitions hold potential security risks for NATO countries.

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RUSSIAN POLICIES ON STRATEGIC MISSILE DEFENSE AND NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL: A REALIST INTERPRETATION

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ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, Russia's reemergence on the international stage has been accompanied by a more aggressive foreign policy agenda. This confrontational Russian behavior lends itself to the conduct of a case study of the international relations theory known as realism. This thesis analyzes Russian decision making on strategic missile defense and nuclear arms control from a realist perspective. Russia's policies appear to be shaped by realist principles such as zero-sum calculations, the existence of an anarchic international system, and the continuing attempts to alter the balance of power to Moscow's advantage. Moscow holds that U.S.-led ballistic missile defense (BMD) efforts could not only neutralize Russia's nuclear deterrent, but upset strategic stability. Russia's nuclear weapons serve a critical deterrent role and fulfill political purposes, so Moscow is highly resistant to nuclear arms reductions beyond those specified in the 2010 New START Treaty. Russia even seeks to modernize and expand its nuclear arsenal, but it will be constrained by economic realities. Despite these constraints, Russia's great power ambitions hold potential security risks for NATO countries.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABM	antiballistic missile
AFB	Air Force base
BMD	ballistic missile defense
BPI	boost-phase intercept
CONOPS	concept of operations
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
EPAA	European Phased Adaptive Approach
GDP	gross domestic product
ICBM	intercontinental ballistic missile
INF	intermediate-range nuclear forces
MIRV	multiple independently-targeted reentry vehicles
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSNW	nonstrategic nuclear weapons
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SALT	supporting arms liaison treaty
SLBM	submarine-launched ballistic missile
SM	Standard Missile
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
THAAD	Terminal High Altitude Area Defense
UEWR	upgraded early warning radar
WMD	weapons of mass destruction

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I. INTRODUCTION

The United States and Russia have a history of both cooperation and conflict in the areas of strategic missile defense and nuclear arms control. The decades of the Cold War were interwoven with periods of détente and rising tensions, remarkable political cooperation and frustrating diplomatic efforts. This turbulent trend appears to have continued even after the collapse of the Soviet empire. Despite a nuclear and conventional arms race, the USSR and the United States signed landmark agreements, including the SALT, INF, and START treaties. These two titans even managed to sign the ABM Treaty in 1972—a treaty that many Americans interpreted as a pact designed to ensure mutual vulnerability. In the wake of the withdrawal of the United States from the ABM Treaty in 2002, coupled with Russia's fall from great power status and advances in missile defense technology, political tensions have risen yet again. Russia is afraid of the newest iteration of U.S. missile defense plans, notably the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA), which is the U.S. contribution to NATO's strategic missile defense effort. U.S.-Russian talks on missile defense and nuclear arms control have stalled since the signature of the New START Treaty in April 2010. The Russians have also expressed threats regarding U.S. and NATO missile defense efforts, apparently due to misperceptions and distrust of the United States and its NATO allies.

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the analytical framework that shapes Russian decision-making on strategic missile defense and nuclear arms control? This thesis will analyze the interactions between Russia and the United States in these contentious areas using a realist lens, focusing on the Russian perspective since 2002, when the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty took effect. The thesis will examine the issues by taking a state-centric realist approach in which Russia acts for the preservation of its security and in line with its national interests. This approach will, it is hoped, determine whether this Russian behavior is rational from a realist perspective. Is Russia portraying U.S. and NATO missile defense efforts as a threat to its national security in order to gain strategic

concessions in nuclear arms control negotiations with the United States? Moscow claims that a U.S.-led NATO missile defense shield would threaten Russian strategic nuclear deterrence. Is this an actual fear or a feigned panic being used as an instrument of manipulation?

This thesis will also review some assessments of the rationality of the Russian fears of U.S. and NATO missile defense efforts using a technical capabilities-based approach. This objective analysis of U.S. and NATO BMD prospects and Russian missile programs will assess the validity of Russian concerns. Are the Russian concerns that the United States and its NATO allies could upset the strategic balance justified? Could U.S.-led missile defense programs undermine strategic stability? If the Russian fear of the U.S.-led BMD program is irrational and not grounded in an objective assessment of the program's potential capabilities, other geopolitical concerns are the likely drivers of Russia's foreign policy behavior.

B. IMPORTANCE

Despite the supposed "reset" in U.S.-Russian relations announced in 2009 by the Obama administration, Russia has taken every opportunity to gain strategic concessions from the United States.[1] Russia has a zero-sum game mindset in international politics, so its foreign policy is oriented in terms of geopolitical competition. Its goal is to maximize its own power while minimizing American strength and influence. The issues of missile defense and nuclear arms control are no exception. Although missile defense has become a NATO priority, Russia views NATO as no more than a tool to further U.S. foreign policy.[2] In 2012, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, now the President of the Russian Federation, stated, "Today, NATO is more a foreign policy tool than a military bloc. The United States is using NATO primarily as a tool to preserve its leadership within the

1 Janusz Bugajski, *Georgian Lessons: Conflicting Russian and Western Interests in the Wider Europe* (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2010), 6.

2 Oksana Antonenko and Bastian Giegerich, "Rebooting NATO-Russia Relations," *Survival* 51, no. 2 (2009): 14.

Western community."[3] NATO efforts to bolster missile defense capabilities are seen as primarily a U.S.-led endeavor. This is an important distinction because this thesis focuses mainly on the bilateral interactions between Russia and the United States, though NATO's role is still vital. A comprehensive understanding of Russian decision-making may enable policymakers to anticipate future Russian reactions to U.S. and NATO initiatives.

Analyses of Russian behavior are still relevant after the end of the Cold War because it is important for U.S. policymakers to understand the decision-making of one of the world's leading nuclear powers. The United States observed in its 2010 National Security Strategy that Russia is one of the "key centers of influence"[4] in the 21st century, and that it has "reemerged in the international arena as a strong voice."[5] Even if Russia is not at the center of U.S. foreign policy, it should be a priority for America to understand a geopolitical rival, especially in light of the recent military aggression in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014.

C. HYPOTHESES

The research question has the potential to spawn several hypotheses to account for Russian behavior. The analytical framework that shapes Russian decision making could consist of entirely realist reasons. A realist oriented hypothesis could be framed as follows: The principal features of realism, including the anarchic state of the international system, the importance of relative power calculations, and the competition for state survival and aggrandizement, shape Russian decision making on strategic missile defense and nuclear arms control. A second possibility is that realist factors fail to fully account for Russian behavior in these areas, in which case this thesis would differentiate between the areas where realism does or does not apply. Another possible conclusion is that no

3 "Prime Minister Vladimir Putin Meets with Experts in Sarov," *Archive of the Official Site of the 2008–2012 Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin*, February 24, 2012, http://archive.premier.gov.ru/eng/events/news/18248/.

4 *United States National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 2010), 3, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf.

5 Ibid., 8.

Russian views can be explained by realism, in which case the null hypothesis would be assessed: that is, that realist theories fail to explain Russian behavior in strategic missile defense and nuclear arms control.

Liberal institutional incentives, domestic politics, attributed social meanings, and historically defined state identities could also account for Russian foreign policy decisions, but these are beyond the scope of this thesis. This thesis does not intend to cover the entire spectrum of international relations theory. Realism offers a plausible interpretation that deserves investigation. While other schools of international relations theory, such as liberalism and constructivism, may have noteworthy arguments, realism appears to have the most explanatory power. This thesis will assess to what extent the realist school of thought in international relations theory explains Russian decision making on strategic missile defense and nuclear arms control. Russia seems to be driven primarily by power ambitions while security concerns complicate the pursuit of those goals.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is vast scholarship on U.S.-Russia relations, missile defense, and arms control, but authors writing about these issues in the post-Cold War era rarely use theories of international relations. Researchers occasionally apply realist arguments, but they do not name theories directly and do not develop those arguments along theoretical lines. There is an abundance of international relations theories and variants of each, but this thesis does not intend to explore every derivative of realism.

Morgenthau is one of the prominent contemporary expositors of realism, and his book, *Politics Among Nations*, describes the classic theory of political realism. His book covers a myriad of causal relationships, but Morgenthau makes the basic argument that "International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power."[6] Power and—more importantly—the balance of power stand at the heart of Morgenthau's examination.

6 Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*: *The Struggle for Peace and Power*, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954), 25.

States are the primary actors in international politics. From this perspective, studying the motives and ideas of individuals does little to further the understanding of international relations.

Kenneth Waltz, another realist scholar, wrote *Theory of International Politics*, in which he sets out a theory of international relations termed structural realism. As with Morgenthau, power is central to Waltz's realist analysis. Waltz approaches international relations by focusing on the structure of relations among states, rather than on any individual state or its constituent individuals. According to Waltz, there are three principles that define a political structure: the organization of the system, the character of the units (states), and the distribution of capabilities across those units.[7] He is concerned with the effect systemic pressures have on countries' foreign policies.

John Mearsheimer, yet another realist thinker, wrote *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, in which he presents a theory of international relations known as offensive realism. This theory follows most of the realist tenets laid down by Morgenthau and Waltz, with some exceptions. According to offensive realism, great powers seek to maximize their share of world power by striving for regional and eventually global hegemony because survival is only guaranteed by being the most powerful actor in the system.[8] Mearsheimer measures power in terms of material capabilities, rather than influence; however, he makes a distinction between military and latent power. Latent power is based on a country's population and wealth, and ample latent power is a necessary precursor to military power. Mearsheimer has clear assumptions and lays out causal relationships. He is also working with a small set of cases (only great powers), from which he derives his theory.

Experts on U.S.-Russian interactions tend to agree that current relations concerning missile defense and nuclear arms control are strained at best. Bugajski, Tsygankov, and Kipp hold that Russia claims to be a great power, seeks to diminish

7 Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1979), 82.

8 John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001), 33.

American influence, and promote a more multipolar world.[9] This might be based on Medvedev's August 2008 interview outlining his five foreign policy principles.[10] As Schroder, Dimitrakopoulou, and Liaropoulos note, Russia's 2009 National Security Strategy includes a claim to be a hegemonic power in the post-Soviet space.[11] Many Russians hold that a comprehensive U.S. missile defense system would impede Russia's great power ambitions. Coyle and Samson, however, argue that the current state of technology renders the U.S. BMD program almost useless and undoubtedly ineffective against basic missile attacks, let alone complex ICBMs with decoy systems.[12] This implies that the Russian fear of the U.S. BMD program is objectively unfounded. Furthermore, Coyle and Samson argue that U.S. BMD plans in Europe continue to strain U.S. relations with Russia without providing tangible positive results.

The following scholars represent some of the prevailing views on missile defense and nuclear arms control, and they generally approach the issues from a policy analysis or a historical perspective.

Jeffrey Mankoff's article, "The Politics of U.S. Missile Defense Cooperation with Europe and Russia," highlights some Russian concerns about the U.S.-led missile defense efforts. He notes that the Russians viewed the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty as undermining strategic stability and states that this act would "weaken one of the few

9 Janusz Bugajski, "Russia's Pragmatic Reimperialism," *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* 4, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 5; Andrei Tsygankov, "Preserving Influence in a Changing World: Russia's Grand Strategy," *Problems of Post-Communism* 58, no. 2 (2011): 28; Jacob W. Kipp, "Russia as a Nuclear Power in the Eurasian Context," in Ashley J. Tellis, Abraham M. Denmark, and Travis Tanner, eds., *Strategic Asia 2013–14: Asia in the Second Nuclear Age* (Seattle and Washington, D.C.: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2013), 56.

10 "Interview Given by Dmitry Medvedev to Television Channels Channel One, Rossia, NTV," *President of Russia*, August 31, 2008, http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2008/08/31/1850_type82912type82916_206003.shtml.

11 Henning Schroder, "Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020," *Russian Analytical Digest*, no.62 (June 18, 2009): 6; Sophia Dimitrakopoulou and Andrew Liaropoulos, "Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020: A Great Power in the Making?" *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* 4, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 35.

12 Philip Coyle and Victoria Samson, "Missile Defense Malfunction: Why the Proposed U.S. Missile Defenses in Europe Will Not Work," *Ethics and International Affairs* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2008), http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/publications/journal/22_1/special_report/001.html/:pf_printable.

remaining bases on which Russia could claim major power status."[13] He also points out that the Russians feared Phase 4 of the EPAA because this phase was specifically designed to shoot down ICBMs, which are the backbone of the Russian strategic nuclear deterrent.[14] Although the U.S. government cancelled Phase 4 in March 2013, Russia still worries that a future U.S. administration could build upon the proposed BMD system. While the United States has repeatedly stated that Russian ICBMs are not in danger, the Russian general staff and military commanders, who have been gaining influence in missile defense discussions, are skeptical of U.S. assurances about U.S. BMD capabilities.[15] Mankoff's own views reflect skepticism about the probable technical performance capabilities of U.S. BMD. In his own words, "Notwithstanding the Obama administration's stated confidence in the SM-3 missile and the *Aegis* cruiser, the technology remains unproven and expensive."[16]

Janusz Bugajski argues that the Russians use the U.S.-proposed missile defense shield in Europe as a pawn in "security chess," and that they use the supposed threat to Russia's national security as a means to gain concessions.[17] Russia views security in terms of zero-sum calculations, so gains made by the United States in European security matters are seen as setbacks for Russia's own defense. Therefore, one of Russia's fundamental goals is to undermine the role of the United States in the European security architecture by impeding the pursuit of U.S. and NATO missile defense plans. This goal is a part of a broader effort to transform Europe into "an appendage of the Russian sphere of influence" and undercut "Europe's connections with the United States."[18] Russia acts aggressively in order to gain concessions, and weak Western responses only encourage further aggressive foreign policy behavior by Moscow.

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13 Jeffrey Mankoff, "The Politics of U.S. Missile Defense Cooperation with Europe and Russia," *International Affairs* 88, no. 2 (2012): 334.

14 Ibid., 340.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., 344.

17 Bugajski, "Russia's Pragmatic Reimperialism," 13.

18 Ibid., 7.

Jacob Kipp's study, "Russia as a Nuclear Power in the Eurasian Context," describes the role of nuclear weapons in Russia's security and the implications for geopolitics due to Russia's nuclear policies. He approaches the issue from a historical perspective and outlines how the Soviet nuclear inheritance has shaped Russian security strategy. Currently, Russia relies heavily on nuclear weapons for deterrence because of the poor condition of its conventional military forces. Nuclear weapons, including non-strategic nuclear weapons, are considered to be essential for maintaining strategic stability. Since the 2010 New START Treaty, U.S.-Russian discussions on nuclear arms control appear to have come to a halt. Russia does not seem to desire any cuts in its nuclear weapons. Additionally, Russia's distinctive geopolitical position and conventional military deficiencies have expanded the role of nuclear weapons to be able to respond to a variety of possible contingencies. Kipp foresees difficulty in any future cooperation between the United States and Russia: the optimism arising from the 2009 "reset" has faded.[19]

Pavel Podvig's analysis, "Russia's Nuclear Forces: Between Disarmament and Modernization," emphasizes the focus of the current Russian nuclear policy. He also explains the Russian emphasis on the link between offensive and defensive capabilities. Maintaining the strategic balance with the United States is still considered to be essential for protecting Russia's national security.[20] The Russian emphasis on strategic stability was evident in the important role that Russia attributed to arms control agreements with the United States.[21] According to Podvig, Russia believes that the purpose of the U.S. BMD program is to undermine its nuclear deterrent.[22] BMD would "undermine the strategic balance that exists between the offensive forces of the two countries," so Russia desires legal limits on defensive capabilities in addition to offensive forces.[23] The

19 Kipp, "Russia as a Nuclear Power."

20 Pavel Podvig, "Russia's Nuclear Forces: Between Disarmament and Modernization," *Proliferation Papers* 37, (Spring 2011): 7.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., 15.

23 Ibid.

preamble of the New START Treaty contains a statement acknowledging the link between offensive and defensive forces, but Podvig holds that missile defenses would not threaten offensive forces, "even at very low levels of offensive forces."[24]

Problems and Prospects of Russia's Cooperation with U.S./NATO in the Field of Missile Defense is a Russian report prepared by various defense experts and specialists in national and international security. The report analyzes the political and military spheres of missile defense issues while also examining from a technical perspective interceptors and related technology. The authors advocate greater cooperation between Russia and the United States as in the best interest of both parties. They conclude that Moscow is justified in seeking legal constraints guaranteeing the non-targeting of Russian systems,[25] though the threat posed by the EPAA to Russia's strategic deterrent is limited.[26] There is potential for cooperation, but both sides must overcome decades of mistrust.

Mikhail Tsypkin's article, "Russia, America, and Missile Defense," discusses cultural aspects in addition to the political and strategic considerations raised by missile defense issues. According to Tsypkin, the negative response to U.S. missile defense is due primarily to political and cultural reasons, while technical concerns are secondary.[27] Tsypkin highlights the history of Soviet threat inflation, as well as the effects on Russian threat perceptions of the U.S.-led BMD program due to a history of backwardness.[28] The Russians want a place in the European security system due to their identity as Europeans,[29] not simply to exert influence over Europe's defense architecture. Tsypkin argues that Russian culture, shared experiences, and even business interests seem to

24 Podvig, "Russia's Nuclear Forces," 20.

25 V. I. Trubnikov et al., *Problems and Prospects of Russia's Cooperation with U.S./NATO in the Field of Missile Defense* (Moscow: Institute of World Economy and International Relations Russian Academy of Sciences, 2011), 15.

26 Ibid., 18.

27 Mikhail Tsypkin, "Russia, America, and Missile Defense," *Defense and Security Analysis* 28, no. 1 (2012): 56.

28 Ibid., 57–58.

29 Ibid., 61.

shape leaders' foreign policy decisions. In other words, factors in addition to the competitive power considerations in realism deserve attention.

E. METHODS AND SOURCES

This thesis presents the issues of strategic missile defense and nuclear arms control as two case studies of the broader phenomenon of Russia's foreign policy behavior. This examination of the analytical framework that shapes Russian decision making contains, it is hoped, some external validity in showing that missile defense and nuclear arms control are just two aspects of more general behavior recently exhibited by the Russian Federation. The findings may then be applied to Russia's behavior in other spheres. The basic analytical approach of this thesis is historical and qualitative, rather than statistical and quantitative in nature.

In addition to scholarly secondary sources, this thesis relies on a variety of primary source materials. These sources include government documents originating from both Washington and Moscow, as well as briefings, conferences, and official statements from government agencies. This thesis also analyzes the views of prominent government officials who are likely to influence state policy, such as heads of state and government, influential military commanders, and representatives of government agencies. The Medvedev and Putin administrations produced a few policy documents that provide some insight into the mentality of Russian elites: the 2008 *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*, the 2009 *National Security Strategy until 2020*, and the two most recent military doctrines of the Russian Federation. Additionally, the U.S. Missile Defense Agency has published reports and held several briefings in Moscow on the technical aspects of the BMD program.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis is organized in five chapters: this introduction, strategic missile defense, nuclear arms control, a review of assessments of U.S. and Russian capabilities, notably in relation to strategic stability, and a conclusion describing some of the security implications for the United States and its NATO allies. This thesis examines realism's

applications to strategic missile defense and nuclear arms control before assessing Russia's nuclear capabilities with respect to U.S. missile defenses. Missile defense is discussed first because Moscow's strategic planners have always regarded strategic BMD as an important conditioning factor in nuclear arms control.

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II. STRATEGIC MISSILE DEFENSE

U.S.-Russia relations over strategic missile defense have a rocky history grounded in fear and mistrust. These difficulties date back to the Cold War, and recent events have not relieved tensions. The United States seeks to build a ballistic missile defense (BMD) system in Europe, as its contribution to a NATO missile defense architecture, while Russia has done everything in its power to stop its deployment or at the very least shape the conditions of its development on terms favorable to the Kremlin. President George W. Bush's proposed "third site" was seen as a threat, and President Obama's proposed European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) has, in Russian eyes, the potential to be even more of a danger. Russia has responded aggressively for the most part, at one point threatening a preemptive strike against these missile defense facilities in Europe should the situation deteriorate.[30]

Russia's behavior raises the age old question of how countries make foreign policy decisions. Realism, a well-known theory of international relations, has great explanatory power in this situation. The core concepts presented under the light of realist theories illuminate Russia's actions in response to U.S.-led missile defense efforts as a series of carefully calculated political maneuvers.

A. GREAT POWER AMBITIONS

Russia claims to be a great power and an influential actor in international politics. In terms of a purely military definition, there can be no denying this assertion. In John Mearsheimer's view, military means are all that matter in determining great power status because great powers only need to be able to put up a fight against the most powerful state in the system.[31] The sheer number of nuclear weapons Russia possesses is enough to substantiate this claim. Mark Schneider believes these weapons to be the only validation of Russia's great power standing: "Today the only basis for Russia's claims to world

30 "Russia Warns on Missile Defence Deal with NATO and US," *BBC*, May 3, 2012, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17937795.

31 Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, 5.

power status is its nuclear capability."[32] The distinction of Russia being a great power is relevant to realism because it is appropriately subject to Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism. Russia may also be viewed through the lens of Morgenthau's political realism because Russia is actively involved in international political struggles that, according to Morgenthau, are driven by power considerations by their very nature.[33] Russia, like every state seeking to thrive in the international arena, is motivated by power politics.

1. Multipolarity

Russia has not only stated on multiple occasions that it is a great power, but that it will also become "a full-fledged member of a multipolar international order."[34] Russia seeks to replace a U.S.-dominated unipolar world in favor of multipolarity with Russia playing an important role in global politics.[35] This is not to say that Russia favors multilateralism because it would rather enhance its own power, free of being checked by smaller countries in international organizations.[36] Russia is clearly unsatisfied with the status quo balance of power and is eager to tip the scales in its favor. Recent government statements express these desires. Russia's 2008 Foreign Policy Concept states that Russia will defend its own national interests instead of acquiescing to the desires of other states, acting unilaterally if necessary.[37] Also, Dimitri Medvedev, then the President of Russia, stated in an interview with a Russian news channel in 2008 that one of his foreign and security policy principles is that "the world should be multipolar. A single-pole world is unacceptable. Domination is something we cannot allow," and he specifically mentioned the United States.[38] U.S. strategic missile defense is regarded as a major roadblock

32 Mark Schneider, *The Nuclear Forces and Doctrine of the Russian Federation,* United States Nuclear Strategy Forum (Washington, DC: National Institute Press 2006), 4.

33 Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 26.

34 Tsygankov, "Preserving Influence," 28.

35 Bugajski, "Russia's Pragmatic Reimperialism," 5.

36 Ibid.

37 *The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*, President of Russia: Official Web Portal, July 12, 2008, http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/docs/2008/07/204750.shtml.

impeding Russia's great power ambitions. Russia's stance on missile defense is simply a means to an end. It is one of the ways for Russia to demand respect and legitimacy.

2. Anarchy

Russia sees an anarchic, unipolar world in which the United States clutches onto its own power while subverting Russia's interests. A core assumption of realism is that the international system exists in relative anarchy, which is an ordering principle stating that there is no ruling body higher than the states.[39] Anarchy promotes a "self-help" environment where states must help themselves because there is no higher authority to come to their aid.[40] Sergei Karaganov supports the belief that states exist in anarchy even in a nuclear world and "argues that states must act in their own interests in the absence of an international regime preventing the intervention of other powers."[41] From Russia's point of view, the United States is building missile defense systems not only to supposedly secure Europe from threats from Iran and other "rogue states," but also to keep Russia out of Europe both politically and militarily.

B. SURVIVAL

These perceived U.S. attempts at distancing Russia from Europe are seen as a precursor to a developing security threat. One principle of realism is that survival is the primary goal of the state.[42] Russia, first and foremost, acts to preserve its very existence. Missile defense is regarded as a threat to Russia's national security and the strategic balance, or at least is so portrayed by the Kremlin. Vladimir Putin voiced his concern in 2012, stating that "in our view, an attempt is being made to destabilize that balance and to create a survivability monopoly in their favor."[43] In April 2013, Yuri Baluevsky, former

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38 "Interview Given by Dmitry Medvedev."

39 Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, 30.

40 Ibid., 33.

41 Sergei Karaganov, "Global Zero and Common Sense," *Russia in Global Affairs*, no. 2 (2010): 28, cited in Kipp, "Russia as a Nuclear Power," 46.

42 Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, 31.

43 "Putin Meets with Experts in Sarov."

chief of the general staff and a member of the Russian Security Council, went so far as to say that the United States is preparing for a "first nuclear strike on Russia and China" by building a global missile defense system to reduce their retaliatory strike capability to one hundred missiles.[44] In general, Russia puts forth the argument that the EPAA is aimed at containing Russia because (Moscow asserts) there are no other threats for such a system to counter. From the Russian perspective, the United States deliberately exaggerates the threat of the proliferation of ballistic missile technology to mask its pursuit of capabilities that could be used against Russia and China.

Officially, missile threats from rogue states such as Iran lie at the heart of the United States' concerns; however, a 2009 joint independent assessment by American and Russian technical experts stated that the Iranian threat "is not imminent… and the system currently proposed would not be effective against it."[45] Although one argument of Russian elites is that there is no immediate threat of ballistic missiles from the Middle East, the United States is planning for future capabilities. Even Russian experts note that "it would be a gross strategic miscalculation to start designing these systems after the emergence of a real missile threat."[46] Russian leaders must be aware of the fact that it would already be too late for a country to start preparing for a threat after the threat has materialized, especially if the development of these defensive capabilities would take years. Although the Russian argument about the rogue state threat may be invalid, the Russian rhetoric still follows a key realist tenet: state survival is paramount.

1. Intentions

Even if Iranian missiles are the source of U.S. defensive intentions, Russia behaves in the manner of a great power, and "great powers balance against capabilities, not intentions."[47] Another realist assumption is that states can never be one hundred

44 Kipp, "Russia as a Nuclear Power," 53.

45 "Iran's Nuclear and Missile Potential: A Joint Threat Assessment by U.S. and Russian Technical Experts," *East–West Institute*, May 2009, 6, quoted in Mankoff, "Politics of U.S. Missile Defense," 336.

46 V. I. Trubnikov et al., *Problems and Prospects of Russia's Cooperation*, 17.

47 Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, 45.

percent sure about another state's intentions.[48] Despite any official statements, friendly relations one day can turn into armed conflict the next day without warning. In the Kremlin, a great degree of uncertainty surrounds the real U.S. objectives. These concerns were aptly summarized by former General Baluevsky in 2009: "The cases of Iran today and North Korea in the recent past serve only to camouflage the real designation of the system... The principal aim of the BMD region creation in Europe is Russia."[49] American actions have only increased Russian anxieties, rather than alleviating them. The U.S. Missile Defense Agency held that the proposed missile defense sites in Poland and the Czech Republic were the optimal places for the George W. Bush administration's "third site," but—according to Russian author Pavel Podvig—this was not the case.[50] This judgment only added to Russian concerns. Philip Coyle and Victoria Samson argued that the Russian proposed site in Azerbaijan would actually be better for missile interception based on geography and geometry because it would provide better protection from the south.[51]

Assuming that U.S. BMD intentions toward Russia are presently benign, Moscow rationally fears that a future U.S. administration could make the BMD system more capable, and redirect its purpose. President Obama scrapped President Bush's plan for the "third site," and a logical assumption is that a future administration could build upon the Obama administration's EPAA to increase the number of interceptors and change their deployment locations. From the Russian perspective, U.S. actions also do not support its stated intent. In the Russian view, U.S. policies consistently threaten Russian security interests, such as the 2002 withdrawal from the 1972 ABM treaty. The U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty was seen by Moscow as a step to gain a strategic advantage by evading defensive limits,[52] and to make matters worse, to "weaken one of the few

48 Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, 31.

49 Yury Baluevsky, "About BMD," *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, May 4, 2007, http://www.rg.ru/2007/05/04/balyevskii.html quoted in Sergey Oznobishchev, "Prospects for U.S-Russian Arms Control and Disarmament: A Russian Perspective," *Strategic Insight* 8, no. 4 (September 2009): 3.

50 Podvig, "Russia's Nuclear Forces," 17.

51 Coyle and Samson, "Missile Defense Malfunction."

52 Podvig, "Russia's Nuclear Forces," 15–16.

remaining bases on which Russia could claim major power status."[53] Since 2009, Russia has been trying to obtain legal guarantees that the EPAA cannot intercept Russian ICBMs. The United States has repeatedly said that the system will not be directed against Russian missiles, but Washington arouses Moscow's suspicion by refusing to make those statements legally binding. The United States Senate gave its advice and consent to the ratification of the New START treaty subject to various conditions, including a prohibition of any constraints on missile defense beyond those specified in the treaty.[54] Currently, the New START Treaty places no restrictions on the deployment of missile defenses, so long as they are only used for BMD purposes.

2. Military Blackmail

Russia treats suspicious behavior as similar to threatening behavior because it holds that it has to assume the worst to survive in an anarchic world. If the United States did create an increasingly effective missile shield, Russians argue, Russia could be on the receiving end of military blackmail. In a realist world, blackmail is an attractive strategy because it relies on the threat of force to achieve results, rather than war.[55] Moscow views the construction of U.S. missile defense facilities as military preparations geared toward Russia. In the words of realist Hans Morgenthau, "the political aim of military preparation is, in other words, to make the actual application of military force unnecessary by inducing the prospective enemy to desist from the use of military force."[56]

Since the Russian perception has been that the United States is attempting to establish a position to use blackmail, the Russian government has responded with blackmail of its own. An official view of the Russian Federation is that the purpose of the U.S. BMD program is to make Russia an object of U.S. military blackmail, so on 23

53 Mankoff, "Politics of U.S. Missile Defense," 334.

54 United States Senate, *Treaty with Russia on Measures for Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms*, The Library of Congress, May 13, 2010, http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/thomas2.

55 Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, 138.

56 Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 28.

November 2011, Medvedev stated that unilaterally developing missile defense sites would provoke countermeasures.[57] Russian officials have gone so far as to threaten preemptive strikes against those locations: "Russia says it is prepared to use 'destructive force pre-emptively' if the U.S. goes ahead with controversial plans for a missile defence system based in Central Europe."[58]

C. POWER MAXIMIZATION

Due to the anarchic nature of the international system and the constant uncertainty of state intentions, Mearsheimer maintains, the best way to ensure survival is to be the most powerful state in the system.[59] States pay close attention to the distribution of power, and consider how to maximize their share. Achieving global hegemony is highly improbable, but the first step is becoming the most powerful state in the region and thus achieving regional hegemony. States seek to alter the balance of power by increasing their own power while decreasing that of their rivals. In this zero sum game, "the pursuit of power stops only when hegemony is achieved."[60] There are two reasons why states will not stop this power accumulation: states are uncertain of how much power is "appropriate," and how much power their rivals will have ten or twenty years down the road.[61]

Morgenthau asserts that this power seeking behavior is inherent in human nature, for "the tendency to dominate, in particular, is an element of all human associations."[62] By this logic, Russia should be acting aggressively against the U.S. BMD program, and this is the behavior observed. Russia's foreign policy follows two of Morgenthau's basic

57 Dmitri Medvedev, "Zayavleniye Prezidenta v Svyazi s Situatsiyey, Slozhivsheysya Vokrug Sistemy pro Stran NATO v Yevrope," http://news.kremlin.ru/news/13637 quoted in Tsypkin, "Russia, America, and Missile Defense," 56.

58 "Russia Warns on Missile Defence Deal with NATO and US," *BBC*, May 3, 2012, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17937795.

59 Mearsheimer, Tragedy, 33.

60 Ibid., 34.

61 Ibid.

62 Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 31.

patterns of political strategy: to increase and to demonstrate power.[63] The corresponding approaches are to pursue a policy of imperialism and a policy of prestige.[64] The policy of imperialism is similar to Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism because Morgenthau and Mearsheimer both claim that states seek to maximize power. By attempting to gain influence over U.S. BMD policies, Russia is not only enhancing its own security, but increasing its political power in the process.

1. Policy of the Status Quo versus Policy of Imperialism

Russia is not trying to merely keep power because it is not following the policy of the status quo. According to Morgenthau, this policy "aims at the maintenance of the distribution of power which exists at a particular moment in history."[65] As Medvedev indicated in his August 2008 interview, his second principle of foreign policy is that Russia seeks to replace the United States' unipolarity with a multipolar world.[66] In Russia's view, unipolarity is the status quo. The appropriate policy consistent with Russian aspirations is the policy of imperialism, "a policy that aims at the overthrow of the status quo, at a reversal of power relations between two or more nations."[67] This policy does not necessarily mean dominating countries or creating an empire reminiscent of colonialism, though Medvedev's fifth principle was that Russia has "privileged interests" in certain countries and regions due to "special historical relations."[68] Russia would like to rebuild the influence, respect, and prestige it enjoyed as the Soviet Union.

A recent example of this desire to increase influence is Russia's effort to establish closer relations with former Soviet republics in a Eurasian Union. Putin stated in an address to the Federal Assembly in April 2005 that "the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century," and he would like to reverse this

63 Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 36.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid., 37.

66 "Interview given by Dmitry Medvedev."

67 Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 42.

68 "Interview given by Dmitry Medvedev."

disintegration process.[69] The Eurasian Union is an economic integration effort that seeks to create a single market, and it was proposed by Putin while he was prime minister in 2011. The Eurasian Union and other economic integration initiatives in the post-Soviet space "have been seen as vehicles for Russia's traditional power approach in the neighbourhood, expressed in a mix of crude power and institutional weakness, and wrapped up in discourses that are predominantly orientated to the past."[70] Putin claims that this project is not "any kind of revival of the Soviet Union,"[71] but Russia is grasping for increased power over its neighbors.

2. Limited Imperialism

Currently, Russia only has the capability to follow a limited goal of imperialism: to reestablish its sphere of influence in the post-Soviet space and to increase its role in European security. American missile defense efforts impede the pursuit of these goals. In the Russian mindset, "zero sum calculations prevail" around "pragmatic reimperialization."[72] Calculations are zero sum in the sense that gains for the United States and Europe are seen as losses for Russia and vice versa. This perception was apparent following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The loss of Russia's empire "stripped Moscow of about half the resources it commanded during the Cold War" which Russia believes were then "absorbed" by NATO.[73] Furthermore, in the international arena, "the concept of power is always a relative one."[74] Measurements of power only matter in comparison to other countries, so Russia views missile defense in terms of the

69 Vladimir Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," April 25, 2005, *President of Russia*, http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2005/04/25/2031_type70029type82912_87086.shtml.

70 Rilka Dragneva and Kataryna Wolczuk, "Russia, the Eurasian Customs Union and the EU: Cooperation, Stagnation or Rivalry?" *Chatham House Briefing Paper*, August 2012, 2.

71 Vladimir Putin, "A New Integration Project for Eurasia: The Future in the Making," *Izvestia*, October 3, 2011, http://www.russianmission.eu/en/news/article-prime-minister-vladimir-putin-new-integration-project-eurasia-future-making-izvestia-3-.

72 Bugajski, "Russia's Pragmatic Reimperialism," 3.

73 Azar Gat, "The Return of Authoritarian Great Powers," *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 4 (July/August 2007): 68.

74 Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 143.

damage it could cause to its own capabilities**,** to say nothing of the advantages it would offer the United States and its allies in dealing with potential adversaries other than Russia. Russian tactics are pragmatic in the sense that Russian elites employ strategies including "a mixture of enticements, threats, incentives, and pressures" to promote their country's national interests.[75] Russia hopes to gain more political clout with its European neighbors by being involved in their defense.

3. Divide and Conquer

The U.S.-led missile defense endeavor is seen as a way to further alienate Russia from the European security architecture. One of Russia's fundamental goals is to diminish the role of the United States in European security.[76] According to Janusz Bugajski, "In this strategic struggle, 'Eurasianism' for Moscow involves two interconnected approaches: transforming Europe into an appendage of the Russian sphere of influence and debilitating Euro-Atlanticism by undercutting Europe's connections with the United States."[77] Missile defense is one of the areas in which the United States aims to further solidify its connection to Europe in the security realm. As Michael Paul states, missile defense is "based on the principles of the indivisibility of Allied security and solidarity."[78] Russia consistently seeks to undercut these principles. "Divide and rule" is a typical method of altering the balance of power; Russia has historically taken this approach to Europe, with the Soviet Union opposing all plans for a united Europe.[79] In Moscow's view, U.S. missile defense efforts would serve to strengthen European unity, further secure the American foothold on the continent, and drive Russia further away from the West.

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75 Bugajski, "Russia's Pragmatic Reimperialism," 4.

76 Ibid., 6.

77 Ibid., 7.

78 Michael Paul, *Missile Defense Problems and Opportunities in NATO-Russia Relations*, SWP Comments 19 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, July 2012), 5.

79 Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 166–167.

D. PROPOSED COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

The United States and NATO have proposed cooperation with Russia on BMD, but Russian reactions have been largely negative and have usually been followed by counterproposals. Russian officials believe that these so-called "cooperative" efforts purposefully alienate Russia from being an equal partner in missile defense. While the Bush administration's third site was in the planning stages, U.S. officials proposed a series of cooperative efforts to alleviate Russian fears. In 2007–2008, the United States offered to allow Russian inspectors access to the planned BMD sites in Europe and the BMD sites in the United States, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said the European sites would not be operational until Iran had the capability to threaten Europe, and negotiators entertained the possibility of limiting BMD capabilities.[80] The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergei Lavrov, argued that these offers could not address Russia's concerns, and that Russia needed to be involved in a real collaborative venture.[81] To that effect, in 2007, President Putin proposed a joint U.S.-Russia BMD system that involved both countries' military assets and comprehensive data exchanges.[82] Russia was finding it increasingly difficult to alter its power position in Europe without being thoroughly involved in the U.S.-led BMD efforts.

After the U.S. abandonment of the third site proposal in September 2009, Russia continued to be concerned about U.S. BMD programs due to the Obama administration's announcement of the EPAA. The U.S. and its NATO allies have continued to declare their openness to cooperation with Russia on BMD, but Russia refuses to accept anything less than its definition of an equal partnership. In the 2010 Lisbon Summit Declaration

80 Richard Weitz, "Illusive Visions and Practical Realities: Russia, NATO and Missile Defence," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 52, no. 4 (2010): 108, doi: 10.1080/00396338.2010.506824.

81 Ibid.

82 Stephen J. Cimbala, "Going Ballistic Over Missile Defenses: What Matters and Why," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 20, no. 4 (2007): 452, doi: 10.1080/13518040701702445.

and in the 2012 Deterrence and Defence Posture Review, NATO stated its desire to enhance cooperation with Russia.[83]

Russia has, however, yet to gain the Alliance's support for cooperative proposals suitable to the Kremlin's goals of undermining NATO's security primacy in Europe. In 2011, President Medvedev proposed a "sectoral" approach to missile defense, in which the close integration of Russian and NATO systems would allow for the two partners to be responsible over a certain area. Russia would be responsible for intercepting missiles heading toward Europe from the South-East. Since Russia would be in charge of defending NATO European territory, the offer was quickly rejected by the Alliance.

NATO proposed further cooperative efforts at the 2012 Chicago Summit to establish joint data centers with Russia; however, Moscow stated that it was not ready to consider this proposal.[84] Richard Weitz suggests that Russia has little to offer in terms of a joint BMD architecture due to its less advanced capabilities,[85] but there is also clearly a historically based "trust deficit"[86] between the two sides. Russian officials believe that the Alliance's rejection of their proposals is proof that the United States and its NATO allies are intentionally attempting to mislead Russia about the purpose of Alliance BMD programs. Russia cannot continue to profoundly influence the direction of European security while being excluded from U.S.-led missile defense.

E. ARMAMENTS

In addition to "divide and rule," an "armaments" approach is another method to maintain or reestablish the balance of power by trying to keep up with and eventually

83 "Lisbon Summit Declaration," November 20, 2010, http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2010_11/2010_11_11DE1DB9B73C4F9BBFB52B2C94722EAC_PR_CP_2010_0155_ENG-Summit_LISBON.pdf; *Deterrence and Defence Posture Review*, May 20, 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87597.htm.

84 Robert Zadra, "NATO, Russia and Missile Defence," *Survival* 56, no. 4 (August-September 2014): 52.

85 Richard Weitz, "Déjà Vu with BMD: The Improbability of Russia-NATO Missile Defense," *Russie.Nei.Visions,* no. 67 (January 2013): 9.

86 Ibid., 13.

surpass other nations.[87] For Russia, the U.S. BMD program is the beginning of the classic security dilemma: Country A takes security measures that threaten country B's security, so country B increases its security investments which in turn threaten country A in an endless cycle. In 2012, Prime Minister Putin pledged to match the United States in armaments: "Russia's military technical response to the U.S. global missile defence system and its segments in Europe will be effective even if disproportionate. But it will fully match U.S. steps in missile defence."[88]

1. U.S. Defense Threatens Russian Offense

Rejecting U.S. statements that the missile defense is designed to counter Iranian missiles, Moscow holds that U.S. defensive efforts threaten Russia's offensive forces, so Russia is seeking to develop greater offensive capabilities. Vladimir Putin stated that Russia would safeguard the strategic balance "by developing the ability to overcome any missile defence system and protect Russia's retaliation potential."[89] Moreover, in 2012, then Chief of the General Staff, General Nikolai Makarov, threatened to station short range, Iskander missiles in the Kaliningrad region to counter the European missile defense infrastructure. Iskander is theoretically nuclear-capable, but Russia has not tested the missile system with nuclear warheads.[90] Russia is also developing a new MIRVed (Multiple Independently-targeted Reentry Vehicles) silo-based ICBM which would be able to better penetrate missile defense systems.[91] Whether Russia's defense industry is capable of creating a new missile in time or whether Russia even needs a new missile is another matter.

87 Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 168.

88 Vladimir Putin, "Being Strong: National Security Guarantees for Russia," *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, Archive of the Official Site of the 2008–2012 Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, February 20, 2012, http://archive.premier.gov.ru/eng/events/news/18185/.

89 Putin, "Being Strong."

90 Nikolai Sokov and Miles A. Pomper, "Is Russia Violating the INF Treaty?" *The National Interest*, February 11, 2014, http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/russia-violating-the-inf-treaty-9859.

91 Podvig, "Russia's Nuclear Forces," 11.

2. Modernization Efforts

Nonetheless, Russia has begun several modernization efforts to improve its nuclear arsenal. In 2012, Prime Minister Putin promised additional modern ICBMs and SLBMs: "In the coming decade, Russian armed forces will be provided with over 400 modern land and sea-based intercontinental ballistic missiles."[92] Since then, Russia's Strategic Rocket Forces have planned to begin production of the liquid-fueled Sarmat, a heavy ICBM with several warheads and missile defense penetration aids intended to replace the SS-18 by 2020.[93] In 2013, the Russian Air Force approved the development of a new nuclear bomber, presently called the PAK-DA, to replace the Tu-160 Blackjack and Tu-95MS Bear heavy bombers.[94] Russia also flight tested a new ICBM known as the RS-26 Rubezh in 2012 and 2013, which may be deployed within the next few years.

F. POLICY OF PRESTIGE

Russian military investments and political posturing are facets of Russia's policy of prestige. Normally, the policy of prestige is never an end in itself: in this case, the policy of prestige is one of the methods used to achieve the aims of Russia's policy of imperialism.[95] The policy of prestige helps accomplish these aims because it influences the evaluations of power relations.[96] Perceptions of power relations, in turn, affect state behavior, and Russia wants the prestige of being treated as an equal partner in missile defense. Russia is known to hold large displays of military force to demonstrate its power to the world. These Russian military demonstrations, such as the Zapad (West) and Vostok (East) strategic exercises, are highly publicized. As Tsypkin states,

92 Putin, "Being Strong."

93 Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, "Russian Nuclear Forces, 2014," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 70, no. 2 (2014): 78, doi: 10.1177/0096340214523565.

94 "Russian Air Force Approves New Bomber Design – Commander," *Ria Novosti*, April 11, 2013, http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20130411/180586959/Russian-Air-Force-Approves-New-Bomber-Design--Commander.html.

95 Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 67.

96 Ibid., 74.

"demonstration of power is the currency of Russian politics."[97] Reminiscent of the Cold War, Russia is pursuing a policy of prestige to "weaken the unity of the hostile coalition."[98] Medvedev's "sectoral" defense proposal, if it had been accepted, would have not only granted Moscow responsibility for the defense of some NATO territory, but it would have proven that Russia is unequivocally an equal strategic partner in missile defense. As a great power, Russia believes that it should be accorded the appropriate respect in the international arena, and it will go to great lengths in political negotiations to accomplish this goal.

G. CALCULATED COOPERATION

A possible counter argument to this idea of Russia's aggressive realist foreign policy behavior over strategic missile defense is that Russia and the United States have, to some extent, cooperated in the past. This counter argument is tenuous because cooperation can occur in a realist world, such as the oft cited examples of the arms control agreements during the Cold War.[99] This is not to say that there is no potential at all for the United States and Russia to cooperate on missile defense at some point in the future, but the past has shown that Russia prefers calculated cooperation. One way for Russia to demonstrate its global power status is to show that it is an equal to the United States in missile defense, and Moscow will continue to try to get as much as it can from these cooperative efforts.

After the NATO-Russia Council met in Lisbon in 2010, prospects for future cooperation on missile defense looked positive. In a joint statement, the two parties stated that they had already agreed to a joint ballistic missile threat assessment, and they agreed to continue discussions on missile defense cooperation.[100] However, Russian leaders

97 Tsypkin, "Russia, America, and Missile Defense," 59.

98 Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 75.

99 Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, 53.

100 "NATO-Russia Council Joint Statement," *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, November 20, 2010, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_68871.htm.

prefer to "continue their interaction with the U.S. to gain strategic advantages."[101] In regard to the European Phased Adaptive Approach, some analysts argue that Russia felt compelled to cooperate because it cannot stop the BMD program in Europe, but Russia can shape its direction on more favorable terms if it plays along.[102] Pavel Podvig thinks that it is more realistic to assume that Russia wants to cooperate to determine the true scope of the BMD plans and to undoubtedly influence those policies.[103] Russia has used the proposed U.S. missile defense shield in Europe as a pawn in "security chess" and has exploited the supposed threat to its national security as a means of gaining concessions.[104] Looking through a realist lens, Moscow's cooperation is calculated to increase power, influence, and status while guaranteeing the survival of the Russian state.

H. STRATEGIC CONCESSIONS

The Russian plan to cooperate to just the appropriate extent to gain concessions and influence over U.S. policies on strategic missile defense has been rather successful. Russia has utilized an imperialist policy to challenge the status quo, while the United States has responded with relative appeasement. In this regard, the Russian Federation appears to hold a certain degree of power over the United States in the missile defense arena. Power is "man's control over the minds and actions of other men."[105] Political power, according to Morgenthau, is influence, so one has power over another if the former can influence the actions of the latter.[106] Based on this definition, Russia has power over the United States and will continue to exert this influence until a greater force halts this inertia.

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101 Bugajski, "Russia's Pragmatic Reimperialism," 10.

102 Steven A. Hildreth and Carl Ek, *Missile Defense and NATO's Lisbon Summit*, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress (January 11, 2011), 8–9. http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R41549_20110111.pdf.

103 Podvig, "Russia's Nuclear Forces," 16.

104 Bugajski, "Russia's Pragmatic Reimperialism," 13.

105 Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 26.

106 Ibid., 27.

1. New START Treaty Concessions

Another realist assumption noted by Mearsheimer is that states are rational actors and aware of their external environment and that they pay attention to the behavior of other states and react based on that behavior.[107] In the Russian case, Moscow looks at U.S actions, and weak responses provoke further aggression. In the negotiations for the 2010 New START Treaty, Russia obtained critical concessions. Russian negotiators managed to insert a statement in the preamble highlighting the connection between strategic offensive and defensive forces. Moscow will probably use this to prevent any further reductions in nuclear weapons. Additionally, the United States "agreed to Russian demands to count its conventional weapons mounted on strategic platforms as strategic weapons."[108] Russia was unable to obtain a legally binding provision on the deployment of missile defenses beyond the limits stated in Article V that prohibits the conversion of ICBM and SLBM launchers to use missile interceptors or launchers of missile interceptors to use ICBMs and SLBMs.[109] In the Russian mindset, conceding only encourages further attempts to use aggressive power politics.

2. Missile Defense Cancellations

Russia has also obtained much larger concessions in strategic missile defense that are consistent with the Kremlin's realist goals. The Bush administration wanted the "third site" in Europe, but the Russians fought the proposal and the plans were cancelled by President Obama and replaced by the EPAA. In March 2013, the United States cancelled plans for the EPAA's Phase 4 deployment of interceptors, which was hypothetically the phase most threatening to Russia's strategic nuclear deterrent. Despite the official reasons articulated for the cancellation, this action was widely seen as a major concession by Washington and a victory for Moscow.

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107 Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, 31.

108 Stephen Blank, "Beyond the Reset Policy: Current Dilemmas of U.S.-Russia Relations," *Comparative Strategy* 29, no. 4 (2010): 337.

109 United States Senate, *Treaty with Russia on Measures for Further Reduction.*

Russia behaves like a typical actor on the anarchic international stage, and the assumptions stemming from realist theories aptly explain this behavior in strategic missile defense. Russia desires to have a greater share of power in the world, claiming that it is already one of the "great powers." Moscow takes into account balance of power considerations in its interactions with the United States, and U.S. BMD programs complicate the pursuit of Russia's ambitions. The EPAA is seen as a future threat to Russia's survival, so Russia uses blackmail, calculated cooperation, and any other means necessary to influence the United States and to further Russia's interests.

III. NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL

Russia's nuclear arsenal plays an integral role in protecting Russia's national security by acting as a strategic deterrent, but in contexts short of war, these weapons fulfill primarily political purposes. The threat of force is always present with a nuclear arsenal, either implicitly or explicitly, but Moscow also uses its nuclear weapons as bargaining chips in negotiations concerning reductions and related constraints. Nuclear arms control is an aspect of Russia's nuclear strategy that Moscow utilizes to gain strategic concessions. Additionally, nuclear weapons are considered to be a symbol of Russia's great power status. Ultimately, Russia's decision making on nuclear arms control depends on its capabilities and the perceived capabilities of its potential adversaries. In this regard, Moscow believes that U.S.-led BMD efforts have the potential to endanger its nuclear deterrent capability. Russia will not engage in nuclear force reductions if it thinks this deterrent capability might be compromised. Russian nuclear behavior, as expressed through political and military documents, statements, and actions, can be assessed by looking through a realist lens. The principal features of realism include excellent organizational tools for interpreting Russian nuclear policies as a means to gain and maintain power.

The same realist factors that guide Russian decision making in missile defense affect Russia's strategic planners on the issue of nuclear arms control. Russian decision-making is dominated by relative power calculations as Russia embarks on its "policy of imperialism" supported by its "policy of prestige."[110] Realist thinkers tend to disagree over the exact definition of power, but two main definitions of power apply to the Russian nuclear case: power as influence and capability. According to Hans Morgenthau, power is influence. Mearsheimer, on the other hand, divides power into two categories: military and latent power. Military power consists of the material capabilities of a state's armed forces, whereas latent power is measured in terms of wealth and population.[111]

110 Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 36.

111 Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, 55.

Waltz shares this idea of power as capabilities: "Power is estimated by comparing the capabilities of a number of units [states]."[112] The principal features of realism—from anarchy and state survival to prestige and relative power calculations—all shape Russian decision making on nuclear strategy.

A. RUSSIA AGAINST THE WEST

Nuclear weapons have continued to feature prominently in Russian decision-making since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Russian elites still perceive a conflict between Russia and the West in which the importance of classic deterrence cannot be overstated. In February 2012, two months before his third term as president, Vladimir Putin stated that nuclear weapons have been the key to the survival of the Russian state as a sovereign entity:

> We should not tempt anyone by allowing ourselves to be weak. It is for this reason that we will under no circumstances surrender our strategic deterrent capability, and, indeed, will in fact strengthen it. It was this strength that enabled us to maintain our national sovereignty during the extremely difficult 1990s, when, let's be frank, we did not have anything else to argue with.[113]

It is the belief of many Russians that their state has only held off the United States and NATO from interfering directly in their internal affairs due to Russia's nuclear weapons. This belief was expressed by high ranking Russian military officers in 2000: "The presence and high level of combat readiness of nuclear weapons is the best guarantee that the U.S. and NATO will not try to establish their 'order' in our country as well, like the way it was done in Yugoslavia."[114] It therefore makes sense that "nuclear weapons and strategic strike capability are the highest priority of the Russian

112 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 98.

113 Putin, "Being strong."

114 Major General Vladimir Grigoryev, Colonel Nikolay Radayev and Lieutenant Colonel Yuri Protasov, "An 'Umbrella' Instead of a 'Shield'—Do Nuclear Weapons Have a Future?" *Armeyskiy Sbornik*, 1 Feb. 2000, in FBIS, CEP 20000503000116 quoted in David S. Yost, "Russia's Non-Strategic Nuclear Forces," *International Affairs* 77, no. 3 (2001): 534.

Federation."[115] Since survival is the primary goal of the state, Russia, above all else, acts to preserve its existence and freedom of action. Russia places such an intense emphasis on its nuclear deterrent not only to survive (though that is reason enough for Moscow), but to thrive in the international system as a respected great power.

B. DETERRENCE

From the Russian perspective, deterrence is the key to survival. This deterrent framework is essential for laying the foundation for Russian behavior with respect to nuclear arms control. There are a number of factors that go into Russia's nuclear planning. Nikolai Sokov, in analyzing the reasons why states rely on nuclear weapons, focuses on variables that specifically affect Russian reliance on nuclear forces. Three of these variables are: "acute perception of external threat," "perceived absence of alternative means to ensure security," and "perception of high utility of nuclear weapons."[116]

1. Threat Perceptions

In terms of threat perception, Russia views most of the policies of the United States as consistently undermining Russian foreign and security policy interests.[117] These policies include political issues, such as NATO enlargement and the perceived U.S. support of color revolutions in the post-Soviet space, and military concerns, such as U.S. precision conventional strike capacity, perceived U.S. attempts to upset strategic stability, and the U.S. European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA). Russian elites are not distinct from their population in worrying about nuclear threats as well. According to an opinion poll conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, thirty-four percent of respondents named the threat of a nuclear war on a global scale as a

115 Schneider, *Nuclear Forces and Doctrine*, 1.

116 Nikolai Sokov, "Why do States Rely on Nuclear Weapons? The Case of Russia and Beyond," *The Nonproliferation Review* (Summer 2002): 105–106, http://cns.miis.edu/npr/pdfs/92sokov.pdf.

117 Andrei Tsygankov, "US-Russia Relations in the Post-Western World," in Vinod K. Aggarwal and Kristi Govelli, eds., *Responding to a Resurgent Russia* (New York: Springer, 2012), 48.

"serious threat."[118] Nineteen percent of those surveyed viewed the deployment of U.S. BMD systems in Europe as another threat to Russian security.[119] Many Russians regard nuclear weapons as a way to address these threats.

Threat "perception," as opposed to actual "threats" to national security, is an important distinction because it does not matter whether the threat is real, only whether the perception of the threat exists. The intent of a possible adversary may be benign, but intentions are irrelevant in a realist world. Despite any rhetoric or actions, states can never be one-hundred percent sure about another state's intentions, and relations can turn hostile in the blink of an eye.[120] Russia acts in such a manner in the realm of nuclear weapons in addition to missile defense. Quinlivan and Oliker support this assertion, noting that some Russian analysts hold concerns about the United States based on capabilities, not necessarily intentions,[121] though Russians are also skeptical about the "hidden" U.S. objectives: "many Russian analysts, including military analysts, believe that the United States actively seeks nuclear superiority (i.e., the ability to launch a debilitating first strike) to ensure its ability to influence Russia's policies and actions."[122] Russia also fears that U.S. conventional precision strike weapons and the EPAA could someday upset the strategic balance by neutralizing Russia's strategic nuclear deterrent.

2. Anarchy Revisited

A second factor, the perceived absence of an alternate means of ensuring Russia's security, affects Russia's reliance on nuclear weapons. Specifically, there exists a perceived absence of reliable and capable allies, international organizations, and treaties, in addition to a lack of an international security framework to address Russia's security

118 Alexander Nikitin, "Nuclear Disarmament in a Non-Proliferation Context: A Russian Perspective," *Strategic Analysis* 34, no. 2 (2010): 202, doi: 10.1080/09700161003592908.

119 Nikitin, "Nuclear Disarmament," 203.

120 Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, 31.

121 James T. Quinlivan and Olga Oliker, "Nuclear Deterrence in Europe: Russian Approaches to a New Environment and Implications for the United States." *Rand Corporation*, 2011, 20, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2011/RAND_MG1075.pdf.

122 Ibid., 19

concerns.[123] Russia regards its Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) allies as incapable of protecting its security. This absence of reliable outside aid is indicative of an anarchic international system, another core assumption of realism. Anarchy promotes a "self-help" environment in which states must attend to their security requirements because there is no higher authority to come to their aid.[124] Sokov speculates that the inability of the United Nations Security Council to prevent unilateral NATO military action in Kosovo and the failure of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to become Europe's primary security institution contribute to Russia's view of having to rely solely on its own military assets to ensure its security.[125] Nuclear weapons allow Russia to help itself in this anarchic system by focusing its deterrent on the United States, the other NATO allies, and implicitly any other country that may consider engaging in hostilities with Russia, notably China.[126]

3. Expanded Roles of Nuclear Weapons

Sokov's third variable is that the perception of the high utility of nuclear weapons based on the concept of "de-escalation" affects Russia's nuclear strategy.[127] In the absence of comprehensive conventional forces allowing for a flexible response to a variety of possible encounters, Russia needs nuclear weapons to serve expanded roles at lower levels of conflict. These include non-strategic nuclear weapons (NSNW or tactical nuclear weapons), of which Russia possesses a much greater number than the United States. Lowering the threshold to using nuclear weapons in limited and regional conflicts could deter an adversary from attack because that enemy would be unwilling to risk even a limited nuclear confrontation to achieve its goals.[128] The Kremlin has recently published documents that show how it has lowered its nuclear threshold: the *Military*

123 Sokov, "Why do States Rely on Nuclear Weapons?" 106.

124 Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, 33.

125 Sokov, "Why do States Rely on Nuclear Weapons?" 106.

126 Kipp, "Russia as a Nuclear Power," 46.

127 Ibid.

128 Sokov, "Why do States Rely on Nuclear Weapons?" 106.

Doctrine of the Russian Federation (2000 and 2010), and the 2009 *National Security Strategy until 2020*.

C. RUSSIAN POLITICAL-MILITARY DECLARATIONS

An analysis of Russia's security policy documents and military doctrines is necessary because they provide insight into Russian views on the likelihood of different kinds of conflict, general assessments on the means Russia is willing to use in order to address those conflicts, and the deterrence message the Kremlin would like to convey to an international audience. Russia uses the term "doctrine" in a much broader sense than the United States. Russian military doctrines are documents comparable to the *U.S. National Military Strategy*. Schneider states that analyzing Russian nuclear weapons doctrine is critical because "doctrine determines the allocation of resources, war planning, and war training. These in turn, will determine what options Russia has available, in the event of a future crisis."[129] Russia is unwilling to severely limit those options by participating in deep reductions of nuclear armaments. The former director of the main think tank of the Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces, Major General Vladimir Dvorkin (retired), notes that Russian rhetoric, including that in military documents, is often inflated, and "there exists a vast gulf between what is said and what is done."[130] However, when it comes to nuclear strategy, declaratory policy and nuclear force structure are necessary for analyzing Russia's nuclear posture.

1. Russian Military Doctrines

The last two Russian military doctrines were published in 2000 and 2010, and they contain some noteworthy conclusions about reasons for the possible use of nuclear weapons. The 2000 military doctrine emphasizes the "decline in the threat of the unleashing of a large-scale war, including a nuclear war," but indirectly names NATO

129 Schneider, "Nuclear Forces and Doctrine," 19.

130 Vladimir Dvorkin, "Reading Russia's Posture," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 63, no. 4 (July/August 2007): 16.

expansion and U.S. policies as external threats.[131] The document also lowers the threshold of use for nuclear weapons "in response to large-scale aggression utilizing conventional weapons in situations critical to the national security of the Russian Federation."[132] The 2010 military doctrine maintains this threshold. This doctrine also explicitly names NATO as an external military danger in addition to "the creation and deployment of strategic missile defence systems undermining global stability and violating the established correlation of forces in the nuclear-missile sphere" and "the deployment of strategic nonnuclear precision weapon systems."[133]

2. Russia's National Security Strategy

A document published in 2009, *Russia's National Security Strategy until 2020*, also names existing threats to security: the policy of countries seeking military supremacy in nuclear and conventional strategic arms, unilaterally developing global missile defenses, and non-compliance with international arms control agreements, which are all clear references to the United States.[134] Russia believes that the United States is attempting to achieve military superiority in nuclear and conventional strike capabilities. The reference to global missile defenses concerns the U.S.-led BMD efforts. The departure from international arms control agreements is likely an allusion to the United States withdrawal from the ABM Treaty in 2002, which was in fact entirely consistent with the treaty's provisions. This document is another example of how Russia orients its declared defense policy around the perceived threats posed by the United States and its NATO allies. As Jacob Kipp and other experts have observed, the Russians are discreet

131 *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, trans. The United States Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Arms Control Association, May 2000, http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2000_05/dc3ma00?print.

132 Ibid.

133 *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, February 5, 2010, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_military_doctrine.pdf original source from President of the Russian Federation website, Moscow, in Russian, February 5, 2010.

134 Security Council of the Russian Federation, *Strategiya Natsional'noi Bezopasnosti Rossiyskoi Federatsii do 2020 Goda*, [*National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation until 2020*], May 12, 2009, http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/99.html.

in their references to China.[135] Threat perceptions influence the doctrine articulating Russia's view of deterrence, which affects Russian behavior on nuclear arms control.

3. Deterrence or Political Purposes?

There is speculation that Russia lowered its nuclear threshold not for deterrent reasons, but to serve solely political purposes: "a number of respected Russian military analysts argue that the real motive is to increase political clout against the United States and NATO."[136] The deterrence argument seems more valid in this instance because Russia has other means with which it can exert political influence when dealing with the United States on nuclear issues. Raising the nuclear threshold has never been on the table as a bargaining chip, and it is rarely mentioned, if ever, in arms control negotiations. Russia is more likely to use nuclear weapons reductions, including strategic and nonstrategic warheads and delivery systems, as a part of its bargaining position in seeking concessions over defense issues such as missile defense and global conventional strike capabilities.

4. Ambiguous Statements

According to Marcel de Haas, Russian statements on nuclear weapons have been "ambiguous" because Russia wants to modernize its nuclear arsenal to maintain parity with the United States and to make up for deficiencies in its conventional forces, but Russia's 2009 *National Security Strategy to 2020* also proposed nuclear arms reductions, most likely to eliminate its obsolete weapons.[137] Proposing disarmament in this document shows that Russia wishes to appear to be a responsible partner in nuclear nonproliferation, but Russia, in reality, wants to eliminate parts of its aging nuclear arsenal that need to be cut anyway.

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135 Kipp, "Russia as a Nuclear Power," 52; Dmitry Adamsky, "If War Comes Tomorrow: Russian Thinking about 'Regional Nuclear Deterrence,'" *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 27, no. 1 (2014): 168, doi: 10.1080/13518046.2014.874852.

136 Schneider, "Nuclear Forces and Doctrine," 1.

137 Marcel de Haas, "Medvedev's Security Policy: A Provisional Assessment," *Russian Analytical Digest*, no.62 (June 18, 2009): 4.

For Russia, nuclear disarmament is not, and has never been, about being a responsible international actor in the fight to support nuclear nonproliferation. Russia's 2009 *National Security Strategy to 2020* states a possibility of a world free of WMD, but this will never be a goal of Russia. In June 2013 in Berlin, President Obama proposed to cut New START-accountable U.S. and Russian nuclear forces by a third, but the Russian response was overwhelmingly negative.[138] It is highly unlikely in the current context that Russia would consider strategic nuclear force levels lower than those specified in the New START Treaty. Contrary to this assertion, in 2010 Alexander Nikitin optimistically wrote that Russia's leadership has expressed "appreciation of this goal," and that reaching a "global zero" has become "thinkable and talkable."[139] This is not possible for three reasons: complete nuclear disarmament would ruin Russia's prestige as a nuclear power equal to the United States, would take away Russia's only claim to superpower status, and would greatly amplify the significance of the United States' already overwhelming conventional military superiority.

5. Foreign Policy Concept

Nuclear parity is not just seen as a security issue to ensure the survival of the Russian state, but it defines Russia as an equal strategic partner with the United States, the world's greatest military power. The 2008 *Foreign Policy Concept* claims that Russia is "the largest Euro-Asian power," "one of [the] influential centers in the modern world," and "one of the leading States of the world,"[140] but this is predicated on Moscow having the military assets, specifically nuclear, to maintain such a position. Russia's elites view nuclear weapons as pillars of the Russian Federation's great power status. These weapons are monuments to the prestige granted to the Soviet Union as a global superpower, and Russia clings to—and modernizes—these remnants of the past, hoping to restore its former glory.

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138 Peter Nicholas and William Boston, "Obama's Nuclear Proffer Gets Russian Rebuff," *Wall Street Journal*, June 19, 2013, http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887323893504578555123840682206.

139 Nikitin, "Nuclear Disarmament in a Non-Proliferation Context," 206.

140 *Foreign Policy Concept*, 2008.

D. RUSSIAN NUCLEAR EXERCISES

Prestige has always been an important driver of Russian foreign policy behavior. Russia's urge to display power is so incessant that Tsypkin's observation deserves repeating: "Demonstration of power is the currency of Russian politics."[141] Russian military exercises, especially ones involving nuclear scenarios, provide Russia great opportunities to demonstrate power. In the Zapad-99 (West-1999) exercise, Russia simulated nuclear strikes against the aggressor forces. The western direction clearly meant that the targets were the United States and its NATO allies. Similar exercises have occurred since then simulating the use of nuclear weapons against the United States and other NATO countries. In 2009, Russia and Belarus conducted simulated military strikes, including nuclear, against Poland.[142] In Russia's 2010 Vostok (East) exercise, Russia implemented the first use of nuclear weapons to de-escalate a hypothetical conventional attack.[143] In 2014, President Putin, along with the presidents of four other CSTO countries—Belarus, Armenia, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan—supervised a strategic nuclear drill that simulated a large-scale nuclear attack in retaliation to strikes on Russia.[144] Russian ICBMs and SLBMs were launched on warning, supposedly in response to NATO nuclear attacks.[145] President Putin and other high officials have personally participated in these exercises, a rare event for a high profile public official in any country.[146]

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141 Tsypkin, "Russia, America, and Missile Defense," 59.

142 Matthew Day, "Russia 'Simulates' Nuclear Attack on Poland," *Telegraph*, November 1, 2009, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/poland/6480227/Russia-simulates-nuclear-attack-on-Poland.html.

143 Kipp, "Russia as a Nuclear Power," 47.

144 "Putin Supervises Strategic Nuclear Drill," *Global Security Newswire*, May 8, 2014, http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/putin-supervises-strategic-nuclear-drill/; "Russia Test Launches ICBM During Exercises Led by Putin," *Ria Novosti*, May 8, 2014, http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20140508/189672546/Russia-Test-Launches-ICBM-During-Exercises-Led-by-Putin.html.

145 Bill Gertz, "Russia Conducts Large-Scale Nuclear Attack Exercise," *Washington Free Beacon*, May 8, 2014, http://freebeacon.com/national-security/russia-conducts-large-scale-nuclear-attack-exercise/.

146 Schneider, "Nuclear Forces and Doctrine," 9.

Although Russian officials would claim that these exercises are meant to ensure the operational readiness of Russia's nuclear forces, these displays of power are also meant to intimidate and to convey a message of strength to potential rivals. This further supports Russia's policy of prestige that seeks to influence perceptions of power relations by various audiences. From the Russian perspective, shows of force support deterrence objectives. These nuclear exercises may also display Russia's belief about the likelihood of such a conflict. If there is a possibility of using nuclear weapons in a future conflict, even a localized or regional conflict, nuclear arms control becomes less about reductions and more about power plays and political maneuvering.

E. NUCLEAR WEAPONS REDUCTIONS

Nuclear arms control is an aspect of Russian behavior in which Russia seeks parity with the United States for the purposes of prestige by being treated as an equal partner, security by maintaining strategic stability, and opportunities for political concessions. This is not a new phenomenon for Russia, for the Soviet Union also placed great emphasis on arms control: "The importance that Russia attaches to the arms control talks reflects the long Soviet/Russian tradition of looking at national security through the prism of the relationship with the United States."[147] What has changed is a loss of status and power, and Russia has responded to this outcome by placing a greater emphasis on its nuclear weapons.

1. Nuclear Parity

Russia's approach to achieving nuclear parity involves preserving the strategic balance by having a nuclear arsenal similar in number and capability to that of the United States. This is accomplished by participating in strategic arms treaties with the United States, the most recent being the 2010 New START Treaty that entered into force in February 2011. Russia will only engage in discussions on nuclear arms reductions so long

147 Pavel Podvig, "Instrumental Influences," *The Nonproliferation Review* 18, no. 1 (2011): 40, doi: 10.1080/10736700.2011.549170.

as they do not alter the strategic status quo,[148] or are, as stated in Russia's 2008 *Foreign Policy Concept*, "up to a minimum level sufficient to maintain strategic stability."[149] In December 2013, the head of the Russian Strategic Rocket Forces, Colonel General Sergei Karakayev, stated that Russia would need approximately 1,500 warheads "in order to resolve tasks of strategic deterrence," taking into account the number of warheads held by other nuclear powers, most importantly the United States.[150] Karakayev's reference to about 1,500 warheads was clearly a reckoning in New START-accountable terms and therefore omitted nonstrategic nuclear weapons and non-deployed weapons. The New START Treaty was beneficial for Russia because it could gain concessions while keeping its entire nuclear arsenal.

These statements about maintaining "parity," "the status quo," and "strategic balance" would seem to support Morgenthau's policy of the status quo, which involves preserving the distribution of power at a point in time.[151] This would also be consistent with Waltz's theory of structural realism and the views of other neorealist thinkers who believe that "states constrain and limit each other."[152] There is a fine line between maintaining and gaining power. Russia's behavior seems aimed at limiting the capabilities of its perceived adversaries while enhancing its own position under the guise of being "equal." Russia would rather see the balance of power shift in its favor and acts to effect that change. Negotiations about strategic arms reductions constitute an area for Russia to exert power.

148 Kipp, "Russia as a Nuclear Power," 45.

149 *Foreign Policy Concept*, 2008.

150 "Russia Needs about 1,500 Nuclear Warheads for Strategic Deterrence," *Interfax*, December 17, 2013, http://interfax.com/newsinf.asp?id=467675.

151 Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 37.

152 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 100.

2. New START Treaty

The 2010 New START Treaty is the most recent iteration of strategic arms reductions pertaining primarily to nuclear weapons. According to Article II of the New START Treaty,

> Each Party shall reduce and limit its ICBMs and ICBM launchers, SLBMs and SLBM launchers, heavy bombers, ICBM warheads, SLBM warheads, and heavy bomber nuclear armaments, so that seven years after entry into force of this Treaty and thereafter, the aggregate numbers, as counted in accordance with Article III of this Treaty, do not exceed:
>
> (a) 700, for deployed ICBMs, deployed SLBMs, and deployed heavy bombers;
>
> (b) 1550, for warheads on deployed ICBMs, warheads on deployed SLBMs, and nuclear warheads counted for deployed heavy bombers;
>
> (c) 800, for deployed and non-deployed ICBM launchers, deployed and non-deployed SLBM launchers, and deployed and non-deployed heavy bombers.[153]

The combination of these 700 and 800 strategic platforms is left to the discretion of the parties to the treaty. Heavy bombers have the most lenient counting rules: each bomber counts as one toward the warhead total, so even a bomber carrying a dozen or so warheads is still just one toward the 1,550 limit. Moscow was apparently against counting a heavy bomber's full nuclear payload because "Russia objected to the transparency provisions that this arrangement would entail."[154]

a. Negotiations

While negotiating the terms of the New START Treaty, Russia sought concessions on conventional strike capability and missile defense. Russia fears that conventional weapons on strategic platforms could be as destabilizing as nuclear weapons due to their high accuracy. While an attack using nuclear weapons would clearly

153 *New START Treaty*, April 8, 2010, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/140035.pdf.

154 Pavel Podvig, "The New START Bomber Count and Upload Potential," March 31, 2010 quoted in David S. Yost, "Strategic Stability in Europe," *The Nonproliferation Review* 20, no. 2 (2013): 211.

invite nuclear retaliation, an attack with precision-guided munitions might present a more ambiguous challenge. Therefore, the Russians were adamant in including conventional strike weapons in the treaty. Conventional weapons on strategic missiles count against the aggregate numbers in the New START Treaty. The United States "agreed to Russian demands to count its conventional weapons mounted on strategic platforms as strategic weapons."[155] Russian negotiators also tried to limit missile defenses, but the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty in 2002 eliminated much of Russia's leverage over the United States in missile defense.[156] The Russians did manage to obtain a statement in the preamble linking offense and defense: "Recognizing the existence of the interrelationship between strategic offensive arms and strategic defensive arms, that this interrelationship will become more important as strategic nuclear arms are reduced."[157] Under this treaty, there are no binding constraints on the deployment of missile defenses other than those described in Article V prohibiting the conversion of missile interceptor launchers to fire ICBMs and SLBMs or of ICBM and SLBM launchers to fire missile interceptors.[158] Additionally, there are no restrictions on the development of long-range conventional strike capabilities based on platforms other than those which are New START-accountable.

b. Estimating Nuclear Force Structure

After Russia eliminates its obsolete weapons, its nuclear arsenal will fall below the New START limits, so it actually needs to do nothing additional in order to comply with the treaty. The United States agreed to make a unilateral strategic offensive force reduction while Russia is allowed a nuclear force buildup. A number of sources estimate how U.S. and Russian nuclear forces will look after meeting the New START Treaty's provisions. Evaluations vary, but Table 1 is drawn from an analysis comparing Russia's

155 Blank, "Beyond the Reset," 337.

156 Podvig, "Instrumental Influences," 44.

157 *New START Treaty*.

158 United States Senate, *Treaty with Russia on Measures for Further Reduction*.

estimated strategic nuclear force structure to that of the United States following New START counting rules:

Table 1. Notional U.S. and Russian Strategic Offensive Forces under New START[159]

	United States	Russia
Deployed ICBMs	420	192
Warheads on Deployed ICBMs	420	542
Deployed SLBMs	240	128
Warheads on Deployed SLBMs	1,090	640
Deployed Heavy Bombers	40	76
Warheads attributed to Deployed Heavy Bombers	40	76
Total Deployed ICBMs, SLBMs, Heavy Bombers	700	396
Total Warheads	1,550	1,258

F. RUSSIAN NONCOMPLIANCE CONCERNS

Although a primary concern for Russia is to maintain nuclear parity, Russian behavior indicates that Moscow would like an advantage. One apparent aspect of Russia's nuclear strategy is to get U.S. concessions to sign arms control agreements, and cheat when it is deemed necessary. Russia may participate in arms control agreements for political purposes and to show its equal status with the United States, but Russia will circumvent treaty provisions if they interfere with Moscow's nuclear strategy.

Realist thinking supports this assertion. According to Mearsheimer, states will ideally strive for nuclear supremacy in their quest for global hegemony, though nuclear superiority is a highly unlikely outcome.[160] Despite the low probability of success, states will still try to gain an edge over their opponents. Mearsheimer asserts that both the United States and Russia have a history of attempting to establish a nuclear advantage over each other by developing "sophisticated counterforce arsenals" and "elaborate clever

159 Steven Pifer, "The Next Round: The United States and Nuclear Arms Reduction After New START," *Arms Control Series* 4, (December 2010): 8, http://dspace.africaportal.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/30205/3/The%20Next%20Round%20-%20The%20United%20States%20and%20Nuclear%20Arms%20Reductions%20After%20New%20Start.pdf?1.

160 Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, 5.

strategies for fighting and winning a nuclear war."[161] This logic could partially explain Russia's alleged cheating and noncompliance with arms control agreements.

1. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty

In 2013, Putin's chief of staff, Sergei Ivanov, openly expressed interest in reconsidering compliance with the INF Treaty[162] as a threat and a way of building political pressure. By some accounts, including that of the U.S. government, Russia has already openly violated the INF Treaty. Among the reports of Russian noncompliance with the INF Treaty, the main concerns are with the testing of missile systems, such as the Iskander R-500 and the RS-26 Rubezh, that have the capability to strike within the banned range from 500 to 5,500 km. According to Mark Schneider, Russia has consistently violated arms control agreements since Soviet times, and it will notably continue to do so because there are almost no repercussions for its actions.[163]

a. Iskander R-500

Others contend that claims of Russian violations are, in fact, exaggerated, if not completely fictional. One concern involves unidentified ground-launched cruise missiles that are suspected to be the Iskander R-500, though it has not been confirmed. Russian officials have stated that Russia has the ability to extend the range of Iskander cruise missiles beyond 500 km, and Jeffrey Lewis speculates that "some critics have conflated—perhaps willfully—Russian statements that it could extend the range with claims that it has."[164] The United States government raised the issue of the unidentified cruise missiles with Russia, but Russia dismissed the matter. It was not until July 2014 that the United States categorized these launches as a violation.

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161 Mearsheimer, *Tragedy*, 225.

162 Kipp, "Russia as a Nuclear Power," 55.

163 Mark B. Schneider, "Russian Violations of Its Arms Control Obligations," *Comparative Strategy* 31, no. 4 (2012): 331, doi: 10.1080/01495933.2012.711115.

164 Jeffrey Lewis, "An Intercontinental Ballistic Missile by any Other Name," *Foreign Policy* (blog), April 25, 2014, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/04/25/nuclear_semantics_russia_inf_treaty_missiles_icbm.

Michael Gordon wrote two recent articles in *The New York Times* describing the U.S. concerns about Russian violations of the INF Treaty. Citing unidentified U.S. officials, in January 2014 Gordon wrote, "it took years for American intelligence to gather information on Russia's new missile system, but by the end of 2011, officials say it was clear that there was a compliance concern."[165] In January 2014, the United States informed its NATO allies about a possible compliance issue,[166] but it was not until July 2014 that the United States officially declared that Russia was in violation of the INF Treaty.[167] Gordon noted that "the allegation will be made public soon in the State Department's annual report on international compliance with arms control agreements."[168] The Russian Foreign Ministry denied these allegations, stating that the U.S. claims are unfounded.[169] Furthermore, the Russian Foreign Ministry's statement voiced Russia's own concerns about the United States violating the INF Treaty.[170]

b. RS-26 Rubezh

The second U.S. concern with the INF Treaty involves the RS-26, which is more of a circumvention than a violation of the treaty provisions. Technically, the testing of the RS-26 did not constitute a violation of the INF Treaty. The Russians first tested the missile in May 2012 at 5,800 km, considered ICBM range, before testing the Rubezh twice more at approximately 2,000 km. Since the missile's maximum range exceeds 5,500 km, the RS-26 is considered an ICBM, though the two-stage Rubezh (based on the three-stage RS-24 Yars) appears to have been designed for intermediate range. According to Jeffrey Lewis, "the subsequent tests and other information suggest the missile's real

165 Michael Gordon, "U.S. Says Russia Tested Missile, Despite Treaty," *New York Times*, January 30, 2014.

166 Ibid.

167 Michael Gordon, "U.S. Says Russia Tested Cruise Missile, Violating Treaty," *New York Times*, July 28, 2014.

168 Ibid.

169 "Russia Foreign Ministry Denies U.S. Accusations of Violating INF Treaty," *Ria Novosti*, July 30, 2014, http://en.ria.ru/politics/20140730/191494793/Russia-Foreign-Ministry-Denies-US-Accusations-of-Violating-INF.html.

170 Ibid.

range and payload are similar to the SS-20 Saber (known in Russian as the RDS-10 Pioneer)—the weapon that was the whole reason for negotiating an INF ban in the first place."[171] In terms of an actual violation, however, there seems to be little supporting evidence.

2. Potential Withdrawal from the INF Treaty

In spite of the possible political motivations for the United States to declare that Russia is violating the INF Treaty, Russian actions are suspiciously like those of a country that would rather not be bound by its treaty obligations. Lewis states that "Russia has long sought to get out of the 1987 agreement,"[172] yet Russia remains a party to the treaty. According to Nikolai Sokov and Miles Pomper, "if Moscow decides the INF Treaty is in the way of R&D programs it considers vital, it will hardly hesitate to withdraw."[173] Threatening to pull out of the treaty may be a way of attempting to exercise political leverage. Russia could easily withdraw from the INF Treaty in accordance with the withdrawal procedures outlined in Article XV: "Each Party shall, in exercising its national sovereignty, have the right to withdraw from this Treaty if it decides that extraordinary events related to the subject matter of this Treaty have jeopardized its supreme interests."[174] Russia could claim that United States BMD efforts, among other concerns, endanger its interests. It could also mitigate some of the backlash by citing the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty as a precedent if necessary. However, there would likely still be political repercussions if Russia withdrew. Backing out of this landmark agreement would, at the very least, be damaging to Russia's prestige and further alienate Russia from the West.

171 Lewis, "Intercontinental Ballistic Missile."

172 Ibid.

173 Sokov and Pomper, "Is Russia Violating the INF Treaty?"

174 *Treaty Between The United States Of America And The Union Of Soviet Socialist Republics On The Elimination Of Their Intermediate-Range And Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty)*, United States Department of State, December 8, 1987, http://www.state.gov/t/avc/trty/102360.htm#text.

3. Justifications for Noncompliance

Despite constant Russian rhetoric about the United States attempting to upset strategic stability, the Kremlin appears to be engaging in such behavior through noncompliance with its arms control agreements. Russian officials may regard cheating as a justifiable and necessary response to reestablish the strategic balance that the United States is supposedly upsetting by deploying its missile defenses in partnership with NATO. The testing of the RS-26 Rubezh and the alleged launch of the Iskander R-500 at intermediate range are the two notable examples. Although Russian violations of the INF Treaty are denied by Russian officials, "Russia's two new missiles offer Moscow precisely the sort of intermediate-range ballistic and cruise missiles that the INF Treaty was intended to prohibit."[175] Since Russia is already acting contrary to the spirit of the treaty, one would suspect that it might as well pull out of this accord with which it clearly disagrees. However, it would appear that Russia believes that it still has something to gain by remaining a party to the treaty. Russia will likely continue to evade these arms control provisions until either it can succeed in limiting U.S. missile defenses, or the United States starts seriously addressing Russian noncompliance by taking action beyond official condemnations.

G. RUSSIAN NONSTRATEGIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Russia's tactical nuclear arsenal is another tool that Russia could use to increase its political clout in future treaties. Podvig suggests that Russia uses the uncertainty surrounding its arsenal of tactical nuclear weapons as an instrument for political leverage.[176] The Russians did not have to give up anything significant due to the New START Treaty—nothing that was not already going to be eliminated. The only category of nuclear weapons in which Russia has a vast numerical advantage is tactical nuclear weapons, and, as Keith Payne notes, "the Russians apparently were adamant about

175 Lewis, "Intercontinental Ballistic Missile."

176 Podvig, "Russia's Nuclear Forces," 22.

excluding tactical nuclear weapons from New START."[177] Although the exact number of Russia's tactical nuclear weapons is unknown, various estimates place that number in the range of 2,000 to 4,000, and it is widely agreed that Russian stockpiles vastly outnumber American nonstrategic nuclear forces.[178] The numerical disparity increases Russian bargaining capacity, increasing leverage in any future treaty or negotiation in which these weapons are on the table. A statement from Russia's lower house of the Federal Assembly, the Duma, is a further affirmation of these weapons as bargaining tools: "Possible reductions and limitations on nonstrategic nuclear weapons [tactical nuclear weapons] should be considered in conjunction with other problems in the sphere of arms control, including deployment of missile defense systems"[179] The United States Senate wrote that the United States would seek "negotiations with the Russian Federation on an agreement to address the disparity between the non-strategic (tactical) nuclear weapons stockpiles of the Russian Federation and the United States."[180] Saunders, Rowberry, and Fearey have suggested that Moscow could try to use any American desires for reductions in Russia's nonstrategic nuclear weapons by demanding the removal of U.S. NSNW from NATO European territory, more concessions on missile defense, or even limiting U.S. conventional capabilities.[181] Russia's tactical nuclear arsenal is another example of how nuclear weapons fulfill political purposes in Russia's foreign policy.

Russia's nuclear weapons play multiple roles: they serve as a strategic deterrent, act as symbols of Russia's status, and function as bargaining chips in nuclear arms control agreements. Threat perceptions shape Russia's deterrent framework, which in turn affects Russian decision-making on nuclear arms control. From a realist standpoint,

177 Keith B. Payne, "Evaluating the U.S.-Russia Nuclear Deal," April 8, 2010, *Wall Street Journal*, http://www.naegele.com/documents/KeithB.Payne-EvaluatingtheNewSTARTTreaty.pdf.

178 Emily Cura Saunders, Ariana Rowberry, and Bryan L. Fearey, "Obstacles and Opportunities for a Tactical Nuclear Weapons Treaty between Russia and the United States," *Contemporary Security Policy* 35, no. 1 (2014): 59, doi: 10.1080/13523260.2014.884343.

179 James A. Acton and Michael S. Gerson, *Beyond New START: Advancing U.S. National Security Through Arms Control With Russia* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, September 2011), 2, quoted in Saunders, Rowberry, and Fearey, "Obstacles and Opportunities," 60.

180 United States Senate, *Treaty with Russia on Measures for Further Reduction*.

181 Saunders, Rowberry, and Fearey, "Obstacles and Opportunities," 62.

Russia is attempting to alter the status quo, or at the very least prevent the balance from shifting further in the United States' favor. Russia wants to limit U.S. capabilities in legally binding agreements, but it selectively abides by these agreements itself. Whether this is due to actual fear for state survival or simple political maneuvering is a difficult assessment.

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IV. ASSESSMENTS OF RUSSIAN RATIONALITY

Thus, far, Russia's strategy in strategic missile defense and nuclear arms control has involved seeking limits on U.S.-led missile defenses, preserving nuclear parity, pursuing political concessions, and maintaining national prestige. Russia consistently uses the perceived threat to its nuclear deterrent as a way to gain concessions. Russia's concerns can be summarized in three statements: in Moscow's view, the U.S.-led BMD programs can neutralize Russia's nuclear deterrent capability, these programs upset strategic stability, and future U.S. BMD capabilities will cause further problems for Russia's nuclear deterrent and strategic stability. This raises an important question: are these genuine and objectively rational fears, or are these feigned fears used as instruments of manipulation? To answer this question, one must examine Moscow's official statements in the context of Russia's interactions with the United States. This illustrates the importance of relative power calculation, a fundamental realist concern. Mearsheimer's two aspects of power, military and latent power, offer a compelling template in this instance. Russian behavior should be influenced by the country's relative military and economic capabilities. Since "the concept of power is always a relative one,"[182] one must look at Russian behavior in light of U.S. missile defense capabilities.

A. REVIEW OF CAPABILITIES ASSESSMENTS

In the Russian national security debate over strategic armaments, Russia's political and military planners focus on the capabilities of the United States. The thought process, according to Nikolai Sokov, is that "if Russia could deter the United States, it could deter any other state or coalition of states."[183] Moscow, therefore, looks at its own defense policies through the prism of Washington's defense policies. In Pavel Podvig's words, "Strategic stability and approximate parity with the United States in the composition and capabilities of nuclear forces are very important concepts in the

182 Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 143.

183 Sokov, "Why do States Rely on Nuclear Weapons?" 102.

domestic Russian security debate, so any U.S. policy that influences these two issues has a significant effect on Russia."[184] Since Russia fears U.S. technical capabilities, one must take a capabilities-based approach to analyzing the validity of Russia's concerns.

1. The European Phased Adaptive Approach

Since the cancellation in March 2013 of its last phase, the European Phased Adaptive Approach has three phases in its currently planned form. The first phase, deployed in 2011, consists of Aegis ships with Standard Missile-3 Block IA interceptors (SM-3) in the Mediterranean Sea, a radar based in Turkey, and a command-and-control center in Germany. This first phase was designed to address short and medium-range ballistic missile threats. The second phase, scheduled for deployment in 2015, will add Aegis Ashore in Romania with a more advanced interceptor—the SM-3 Block IB. Aegis Ashore is a land-based BMD component that utilizes capabilities from the Aegis ships. Phase two was also designed to combat short and medium-range missile threats. Phase three, slated for deployment in 2018, will add Aegis Ashore in Poland with a more advanced interceptor (SM-3 Block IIA) to protect against medium and intermediate-range threats. Potentially, the United States could add Patriot and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) batteries in support of the EPAA.[185]

2. Could U.S.-led BMD Programs Neutralize Russia's Nuclear Arsenal?

Numerous experts have argued against the claim that U.S. missile defenses could adversely affect Russia's nuclear deterrent. In reviewing the works of these experts, it is important to note the difficulty in relying on open source material to accurately assess military capacity. These studies probably illustrate a close, yet most likely not entirely accurate, representation of U.S. and Russian technical capabilities. With that caveat in mind, Dean Wilkening analyzes the rationality of Russian fears of U.S. BMD based on U.S. and Russian military capabilities. He measures the effectiveness of missile defense

184 Podvig, "Instrumental Influences," 40–41.

185 United States Government Accountability Office, *Ballistic Missile Defense: Actions Needed to Address Implementation Issues and Estimate Long-Term Costs for European Capabilities*, April 2014, 3–6.

based on four criteria: the area it can protect, the probability of destroying a warhead (a product of identifying the target among decoys and the probability of destroying the correct target), the ability to survive attacks while functioning effectively, and the size of the system (relative to the adversary's arsenal).[186] A failure in one of these areas means the BMD system will be ineffective.

(1) Missile Overload

Wilkening describes how the proposed U.S. BMD program would likely fail in these areas. The size of the proposed missile defense system is an oft cited example of how easily Russia could overcome U.S. defenses. Relative to Russia's vast nuclear arsenal, the few dozen interceptors of the EPAA would not protect against the simple overload of missiles. Kristensen and Norris estimated that as of March 2013, Russia has about 313 ICBMs with 976 warheads out of a total of 1,600 deployed strategic warheads.[187] There is a remote possibility of future deployments of hundreds of missile interceptors that could decrease this numerical advantage, especially in the hypothetical case of a preemptive U.S. assault taking out a large fraction of Russian ICBMs, but this is a highly unlikely scenario.[188]

(2) Preemptive Strikes

Wilkening also suggests that Russia could preemptively attack the U.S. BMD system in a possible future conflict, as Russian officials have threatened in the past.[189] Although missile defense systems are designed to defend themselves, "the current Russian nuclear programs aim to overcome or even neutralize U.S. missile defenses."[190] At an international conference on missile defense in Moscow, General Nikolai Makarov, then the Chief of the General Staff, stated that Russia would have to take adequate

186 Dean A. Wilkening, "Does Missile Defence in Europe Threaten Russia?" *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 54, no. 1 (2012): 33, doi: 10.1080/00396338.2012.657531.

187 Kristensen and Norris, "Russian Nuclear Forces," 75–76.

188 Ibid., 34.

189 "Russia Warns on Missile Defence Deal."

190 Blank, "Beyond the Reset Policy," 343.

countermeasures as the danger from U.S. and NATO missile defenses increases, such as increasing the capabilities of Russian missiles to penetrate missile defenses, placing additional strike weapons in the south and northwest of Russia, and the deployment of Iskander missiles in the Kaliningrad region.[191] This calls into question the ability of the proposed U.S. missile defense sites to function effectively, should they be attacked. A preemptive attack on these facilities would guarantee a war with the United States, so this scenario, however absurd and improbable, is purely hypothetical.

(3) Countermeasures

Determining the effectiveness of Russian countermeasures to decrease the probability of U.S. interceptors destroying a warhead is more difficult to assess. As Wilkening states, "decoy effectiveness depends on technical details of the missile-defense architecture and the signatures associated with an opponent's warheads and decoys, neither of which are available in the open literature."[192] Russia reportedly plans to improve its countermeasures and penetration aids on its nuclear missiles,[193] and missile defense tests are difficult enough without having to deal with decoys. These general conclusions suggest that the U.S.-led BMD efforts in Europe could not possibly affect Russia's nuclear deterrent without serious modifications to the system.

(4) Footprints

For the area criterion, Wilkening analyzes hypothetical launches by examining the area the interceptors can cover, known as a BMD footprint, along with sensor information, and assuming an approximate speed of 5.0 km/s for U.S. interceptors. Wilkening chooses 5.0 km/s because "this turns out to be the speed below which SM-3-like interceptors have little ability to intercept Russian strategic missiles."[194] In terms of

191 Nikolai Makarov, "O Vzglyadakh Ministerstva Oborony Rossiyskoi Federatsii na Problemy Protivoraketnoi Oborony" [Views of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation on Problems of Missile Defense], May 5, 2012, http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11108033@egNews.

192 Wilkening, "Does Missile Defence in Europe Threaten Russia?" 35.

193 Kristensen and Norris, "Russian Nuclear Forces," 78–80.

194 Wilkening, "Does Missile Defence in Europe Threaten Russia?" 38.

tracking, Wilkening uses the U.S. upgraded early-warning radars (UEWRs) because they constitute "the only sensor architecture that currently can track Russian ICBMs at long ranges."[195] However, this is all a hypothetical argument because "UEWR track data is not sufficiently accurate to provide a fire-control solution for any SM-3 interceptor."[196] With all his assumptions and caveats in mind, Wilkening concludes that interceptors launched from Poland or the Baltic Sea against various Russian ICBMs on a minimum energy or lofted trajectory would have almost no capacity to prevent a missile from striking the United States. Even if it were possible to obtain a fire control solution during the boost phase, an interceptor from Europe launched against a Russian ICBM forty seconds before burnout could only theoretically intercept a missile aimed at the eastern United States. Russia has no reason to fear an upset in strategic stability from European-based U.S missile defenses. However, intercepts could become increasingly effective as defenses are moved closer to the United States.

3. U.S. BMD Ineffective against Russian ICBMs

Past studies and U.S. government agency reports support Wilkening's analysis. For example, Philip Coyle and Victoria Samson highlight the inefficacy of U.S. missile defenses. They argue that U.S. BMD could not possibly hinder a Russian nuclear assault: "Given the large number of Russian ICBMs, even the most futuristic missile defenses would not be dependable against a Russian attack."[197] As of 2008, Coyle and Samson write, the United States had a poor test record of only 7 successes out of 13 attempted intercepts, and it had information about trajectories that no adversary would provide. In 1999, balloons were used as decoys but proved extremely challenging, so they were later phased out of the program. Coyle and Samson argue that the tests were not operationally realistic, and until they are, interceptors will continue to be ineffective against advanced countermeasures.[198]

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195 Wilkening, "Does Missile Defence in Europe Threaten Russia?" 39.

196 Ibid., 38.

197 Coyle and Samson, "Missile Defense Malfunction."

198 Ibid.

In a technical overview prepared by the U.S. Missile Defense Agency (MDA) for a conference in Moscow, Rear Admiral Randall Hendrickson, then the Deputy Director of the MDA, explained that it is infeasible for an SM-3 to intercept a Russian ICBM. Russian ICBMs are too fast and have too great a range, while the SM-3 is launched too late and is positioned in the wrong geographic location. In Hendrickson's words, "Russian ICBMs launched towards [the] U.S. travel on Polar trajectories and are too fast for deployed SM-3 to intercept either [the] ICBM itself or reentry vehicle."[199] The interceptors would have to chase the ICBM. Additionally, according to the report, interceptors would not be launched until after ICBM burnout due to limited sensor capabilities: "Intercept is not possible during boost phase [with the SM-3] due to unobtainable fire control solution."[200] The report asserts that the SM-3 would not even be launched until one to three minutes after ICBM burnout occurs, a fact that supports Wilkening's analysis. Wilkening based his calculations on an interceptor launch at burnout or forty seconds earlier, and the SM-3 still could not achieve an intercept. The U.S. Missile Defense Agency report concludes that the EPAA is not directed against Russia, and that the EPAA is incapable of intercepting Russian ICBMs or SLBMs.

4. Possibility of Boost-Phase Intercept

There has been much debate over the feasibility of a boost-phase intercept (BPI). Richard Garwin suggests that BPI is preferable to a mid-course intercept due to its inherent advantages.[201] Others, however, assert that developing a boost-phase intercept capability is impractical. A 2012 report from the National Research Council concludes

199 Randall M. Hendrickson, *European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) Ballistic Missile Defense: A Technical Overview*, Missile Defense Agency, Department of Defense, Missile Defense Conference, Moscow, May 3, 2012, 5, http://photos.state.gov/libraries/russia/231771/PDFs/EPAA%20Technical%20Overview%20ENG.pdf.

200 Ibid., 6.

201 Richard L. Garwin, "Boost-Phase Intercept: A Better Alternative," *Arms Control Association*, September 2000, https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2000_09/bpisept00.

that BPI is not "practical or feasible"[202] and is limited by "the concept of operations (CONOPS), policy, time, and geography."[203] This type of intercept is theoretically possible, but a boost-phase intercept using the SM-3 interceptors against Russia's nuclear arsenal appears to be infeasible. Although intercept during the boost-phase of a missile's trajectory would circumvent the challenge of dealing with countermeasures and make identifying the target easier due to its bright infrared signature, the time to engage the missile is far too short for an intercept to be practical. The report also acknowledges that "boost-phase systems are only effective against countries that do not have large enough landmasses to allow them to launch missiles from deep within their territory."[204] This vulnerability clearly does not apply to Russia, given its vast geographic extent. The components of the EPAA would probably be positioned too far away to reach a Russian ICBM with the SM-3's current velocity.

5. Ground Based Interceptors

Various Russian defense experts also admit that U.S. BMD programs cannot undermine Russia's strategic nuclear forces. These experts assert that the interception of one Russian missile would require ten Ground Based Interceptors (GBIs), thus making interception "absolutely irrational."[205] The United States currently has four interceptors at Vandenberg AFB in California, and 26 interceptors at Ft. Greely in Alaska. In 2013, following the cancellation of phase 4 of the EPAA, the Obama administration announced a plan to add fourteen more interceptors in Alaska.[206] The United States would require hundreds or even thousands of these missiles to have a chance at effectively negating

202 National Research Council. *Making Sense of Ballistic Missile Defense: An Assessment of Concepts and Systems for U.S. Boost-Phase Missile Defense in Comparison to Other Alternatives*, (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2012), [2-29], https://timemilitary.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/nrc-bmd-report-2012-09.pdf.

203 Ibid., [2-1].

204 Ibid., [2-2].

205 V. I. Trubnikov et al., "Problems and Prospects of Russia's Cooperation with U.S./NATO in the Field of Missile Defense," *Institute of World Economy and International Relations Russian Academy of Sciences*, 2011, 18.

206 Chuck Hagel, "Missile Defense Announcement," *U.S. Department of Defense*, March 15, 2013, http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1759.

Russia's deterrent. In a 2011 report, a group of Russian defense specialists also stated that the proposed phases of the EPAA could only have a limited impact on Russia's strategic nuclear arsenal, even before the last phase was cancelled.[207] Russian nuclear forces could easily overwhelm U.S. missile defenses.

B. ASSESSMENTS OF POTENTIAL DAMAGE TO STRATEGIC STABILITY

Russia's second major complaint concerns the conceivable damage to strategic stability and the balance of capabilities. Russia has often stated that it cannot participate in further nuclear arms reductions in light of U.S. missile defense efforts and advances in precision guided munitions. The importance Russia places on this balance is paramount. Vladimir Putin once stated that it is, in fact, Russia's global responsibility to preserve the strategic balance: "Our national task—not just our national task even, but our responsibility to humankind—is to preserve the balance of strategic forces and capabilities."[208] One of the problems in evaluating potential damage to strategic stability is that analyses of the issue are highly speculative and depend on a variety of volatile factors. One of the crucial assumptions in some analyses is that the United States and Russia will participate in further nuclear reductions—an uncertain outcome in the current political context.

1. Risks of "Low Numbers" of Nuclear Weapons

David Yost examines the risks associated with further reductions in nuclear weapons, specifically, in reductions that result in fewer than 1,000 operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons in the U.S. and Russian stockpiles. He analyzes the potential risks to strategic stability, defined as "a situation in which there is a low probability of major-power war."[209] Although another major-power war appears improbable for the foreseeable future, other security issues could arise in the wake of further nuclear

207 Trubnikov et al., "Problems and Prospects," 18.

208 "Putin Meets with Experts in Sarov,"

209 Yost, "Strategic Stability in Europe," 208.

reductions. While "some allied observers perceive no risks in such reductions,"[210] Russia believes that fewer operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons, especially in the presence of effective U.S. missile defenses, would undermine strategic stability.

Yost discusses three of the potential security implications of low numbers of U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear weapons: the increased gravity of treaty noncompliance, the greater temptation for preemptive strikes, and the expanded risk of nuclear proliferation. Yost notes that the effects of cheating and noncompliance at lower numbers would be amplified.[211] There have already been Russian compliance issues with the INF Treaty, and numerical disparities could become more pronounced if nuclear weapons were cut back. Additionally, Yost notes that "some European observers said that moving to significantly smaller nuclear force postures could tempt adversaries to consider first strike or preemption strategies or to adopt launch-on-warning postures that could undermine extended deterrence and strategic stability."[212] Russia also fears that reduced nuclear forces would be "more vulnerable to preemptive attacks and strategic defenses."[213] A greater number of nuclear weapons could be considered Russia's deterrent guarantee while also maintaining the ability to overwhelm strategic missile defenses. In terms of nuclear proliferation, if U.S. allies questioned the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence, those nations might seek to obtain their own national nuclear arsenals.[214] Russia would not favor any situation in which a reduction in strategic stability corresponded to a reduction in Russia's security.

2. Stability with Missile Defenses

Bruce Blair and four other scholars conducted a study to assess the effects of reduced nuclear forces with limited missile defenses on nuclear deterrence between the United States and Russia. This study takes a statistical and quantitative approach to

210 Yost, "Strategic Stability in Europe," 213.

211 Ibid., 218–219.

212 Ibid., 219.

213 Ibid., 220.

214 Ibid., 221–222.

evaluating deterrent stability, defined as "a situation where both the United States and Russia would not rationally choose to strike first with nuclear weapons."[215] The study concludes that "stable deterrence based on the mutual vulnerability of U.S. and Russian urban centers can exist with relatively low numbers of strategic forces," even with missile defenses and conventional strikes.[216] Based on the results of this study, Russia should not fear that further reductions in nuclear weapons would undermine strategic stability or Russia's nuclear deterrent capacity, even in the presence of U.S. missile defenses.

These scenarios are based on the assumption of further arms reduction treaties such as the New START Treaty. Without any further nuclear weapons reductions, increasingly capable missile defenses still appear to pose a minimal, or even no, threat to overall strategic stability. According to Blair and his co-authors, even with fewer nuclear weapons and missile defenses, Russia should not fear greater instability. However, as Yost highlights, fewer U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons could in some circumstances pose several risks to strategic stability. Russia's fear that U.S.-led missile defense efforts could undercut strategic stability appears to be unjustified, but there could be problems for strategic stability in the wake of future nuclear weapons reductions. Consequently, it is likely that the Russians will continue to resist additional rounds of nuclear disarmament.

C. FEARS OF FUTURE CAPABILITIES

In sum, from a technical perspective, current and planned U.S.-led BMD programs do not threaten Russia's nuclear deterrent or undermine strategic stability. Russian fears, as stated by various Russian government officials, politicians, and military leaders, are irrational in the context of current and foreseeable U.S. military capabilities. However, another common argument is that Russia fears future U.S. capabilities. Although numerous experts from a variety of backgrounds have concluded that the U.S.

215 Bruce Blair et al., "One Hundred Nuclear Wars: Stable Deterrence between the United States and Russia at Reduced Nuclear Force Levels Off Alert in the Presence of Limited Missile Defenses," *Science and Global Security* 19 (2011), 169, http://scienceandglobalsecurity.org/archive/sgs19blair.pdf.

216 Ibid., 186.

BMD system cannot, in its current and prospective form, negate Russia's nuclear deterrent, who is to say that the United States could not augment the system several decades from now? Russia, in response, would have to increase its own military spending to improve and expand its arsenal. The Russians may fear a possible arms race, in view of their relatively weak economic position compared to that of the United States.[217] Every state faces budgetary constraints, and Russia is no exception.

1. Defense Spending Comparison

As Russia seeks to modernize its aging nuclear arsenal, it will only be able to accomplish what it can pay for. It costs billions of dollars to modernize, improve, and expand nuclear arsenals. Every state's nuclear strategy is ultimately limited by the resources it can allocate from its defense budget. Vladimir Putin stated that Russia has "earmarked 23 trillion rubles [approximately 643 billion dollars] for the development, upgrading and technical re-equipment of the army, and the modernization of our defence industry."[218] Putin added that "we have strained ourselves to the limit to come up with these funds."[219] Increasing defense budgets place significant strains on a country's economy. In terms of relative economic position, the United States greatly outpaces Russia. Russia's GDP in 2012 was approximately $2.01 trillion compared to the $16.24 trillion of the United States.[220] There is a similar disparity in defense spending. In 2012, Russia spent approximately $81 billion[221] on defense following a huge increase in defense spending in 2011, of which 10% went to Russia's Strategic Nuclear Forces.[222] This is dwarfed by the United States' base defense budget, which totaled approximately

217 Wilkening, "Does Missile Defence in Europe Threaten Russia?" 34.

218 "Putin Meets with Experts in Sarov,"

219 Ibid.

220 "GDP (Current US$)," *The World Bank*, accessed July 23, 2014, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD.

221 "SIPRI Military Expenditure Database," *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, 2012, http://milexdata.sipri.org.

222 Tsypkin, "Russia, America, and Missile Defense," 57.

$530.6 billion in 2012.[223] The United States has also spent a large amount on missile defense—$9.7 billion in 2013.[224] Washington plans to spend $47.4 billion on missile defense in 2013–2017.[225] Although it is impossible to predict future capabilities, Russia may worry that the economic gap between the United States and Russia will only increase, leading to a larger capabilities gap.

2. The Gaps

The economic gap is clearly visible, and Russians acknowledge that there is already a noticeable capabilities gap. For instance, in 2012 Vladimir Putin stated, "we see how technology is developing. Our partners really are ahead of us, especially in high precision weaponry."[226] Moving forward, an abundance of limited resources will be used by Russia on its defense modernization efforts and by the United States on its missile defense programs. Although the exact cost estimates have not been finalized, the United States Department of Defense estimates that continuing operational and support costs may exceed several billion dollars for some components of the EPAA, and a United States Government Accountability Office report suggests that the total cost will, in fact, be greater since the DOD does not include all BMD elements.[227] Although the long term costs for deploying and maintaining the components of the EPAA will be substantial, the United States has the economic capacity to maintain these expenditures. Over the past two years, Russia has experienced slow economic growth: a devaluating ruble, a decline in the rate of growth for real GDP, and weak industrial production.[228] Russia is in a declining relative economic position for its military modernization efforts.

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223 United States Department of Defense, *Overview – FY2013 Defense Budget,* February 2012, [1-2], http://dcmo.defense.gov/publications/documents/FY2013_Budget_Request_Overview_Book.pdf.

224 Ibid., [4-10].

225 Ibid.

226 "Putin Meets with Experts in Sarov,"

227 United States Government Accountability Office, *Ballistic Missile Defense,* 18.

228 Floyd Norris, "New Cold War Would Differ from the Old," *New York Times,* March 7, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/08/business/a-new-cold-war-would-differ-from-the-old.html?_r=0.

Based on various arguments derived from the realist family of theories, Russia should not rationally fear that any current U.S. BMD program could negate its nuclear deterrent or undermine strategic stability. Russia could, however, reasonably fear that U.S. capabilities in the distant future might affect its nuclear deterrent because the economic disparity between the two countries, in both GDP and defense spending, is so great. Without being directly involved in Moscow's strategic planning, it is difficult to determine the exact rationale for Russian behavior. One possible explanation is that Russia is seeking political concessions now due to its fear of future U.S. missile defense prospects. Russia could also fear that further rounds of nuclear disarmament could endanger Russia's survival by creating an unstable security environment dominated by nonnuclear capabilities. Additionally, Russian officials would probably not readily admit that they are behind the economic curve, and that, as the gap widens, Russia will be in a poor negotiating position.

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V. CONCLUSION

Russian behavior regarding strategic missile defense and nuclear arms control is a case study of the broader phenomenon of realism in international politics. The analytical framework that shapes Russia decision-making consists of realist principles such as the anarchic state of the international system, the importance of relative power calculations, and the competition for state survival and aggrandizement. Russia strives to maximize its share of power in the world, and various Russian elites assert that Russia remains one of the "great powers." Although one could perform analyses of Russian activities in strategic missile defense and nuclear arms control based on other theories of international relations, the explanations are clearest and most persuasive when the situation is viewed through a realist lens.

A. A REALIST INTERPRETATION

The assumptions derived from realist theories aptly explain Russia's behavior in strategic missile defense and nuclear arms control. Russian policymakers are concerned with the balance of power and how its interactions with the United States and other NATO countries affect its security and international status. Russian officials have stated that U.S. and NATO missile defense programs threaten Russia's security, but the actual Russian motivations appear to be aligned with Robert Zadra's observation: "the real Russian concerns had more to do with Moscow's assessment of American global ambitions and strategic superiority."[229] U.S.-led BMD programs complicate the pursuit of Russia's ambitions. The European Phased Adaptive Approach, in particular, could be seen as a future threat to Russia's status and influence, if not its survival, so Russia uses any means necessary to sway its geopolitical rivals and to further Russia's foreign and security policy interests.

Russia's nuclear weapons are also a means to accomplish its great power ambitions. Russia's strategic and nonstrategic nuclear arsenals provide a deterrent against

229 Zadra, "NATO, Russia and Missile Defence," 54.

aggression, serve as symbols of Russia's status, and function as bargaining chips in nuclear arms control agreements. The perceived threats from the United States and its NATO allies (as well as China) shape Russia's deterrent framework, which in turn affects Russian decision-making on nuclear arms control. Through arms control agreements, Moscow seeks to legally bind U.S. capabilities, but Russia will bypass certain provisions when it is deemed necessary. From a realist point of view, Russia is attempting to alter the status quo and, at the very least, prevent the balance of power from shifting any further in favor of the United States.

Russian statements that U.S.-led BMD programs threaten Russian security or the strategic balance are excessive and ill-founded in the context of current and prospective U.S. military capabilities. Russia uses the supposed U.S. "threats" to its national security and strategic stability as a means to seek political concessions. The situation in the distant future, however, may be more complicated. The United States could hypothetically augment its BMD systems over decades with hundreds of capable interceptors to the point where it could actually threaten Russia's nuclear deterrent—if Moscow behaved with uncharacteristic passivity in its force modernization. In terms of latent power, moreover, Russia's relative economic position compared to that of the United States could place it at a disadvantage, should it need to place added strain on its economy and translate its national wealth into military armaments beyond its current modernization programs.

B. PROSPECTS FOR COOPERATION

Future cooperation on strategic missile defense or nuclear arms control between Russia and NATO or between Russia and the United States would face severe difficulties. Russia and NATO have already put forth several proposals for cooperation on BMD, none of which has been successful in creating a joint security architecture. From the Russian perspective, NATO proposals do not treat Russia as an equal partner or address Russian concerns. Russian proposals, such as the "sectoral" approach to missile defense, would place parts of NATO territory under the responsibility of a Russian missile defense umbrella, and the Alliance has declined to accept such an arrangement.

Russian officials view strategic BMD as an important conditioning factor in nuclear arms control. So long as Moscow proclaims that U.S.-led missile defenses threaten its nuclear deterrent and undermine strategic stability, Russia will resist cooperation on further reductions in its nuclear arsenal. Moreover, Moscow will not consider additional reductions in nuclear weapons while Russia lags behind in precision conventional weapons technology. In 2012, Putin adamantly proclaimed that "we will eliminate nuclear weapons only when we have this kind of technology. And not a day earlier! No one should have any illusions about that!"[230] If Russia were to reconsider its position on further reductions in its strategic or nonstrategic nuclear arsenals, it is probable that Moscow would require even more concessions, such as legal restrictions on strategic BMD capabilities and/or the removal of U.S. nonstrategic nuclear weapons from European territory.

NATO has continued to express interest in missile defense cooperation with Russia, but this may not be entirely realistic. NATO consists of twenty-eight separate state entities, and each government has its own restrictions on sharing technical information. Exchanging technical information among NATO allies can be difficult, but sharing sensitive missile defense technology with Russia would face even greater obstacles.[231] Furthermore, NATO governments may fear that Russia would leak BMD intelligence to rogue nations that could use that information to develop countermeasures to these missile defense systems.[232] A final barrier to BMD cooperation would arise from having Russia involved in the BMD command-and-control architecture. With joint control of a BMD system, Russia could potentially prevent its use at a critical juncture, rendering that system useless. Since the signature of the New START Treaty in April 2010, productive discussions on strategic missile defense and nuclear arms control have been suspended, and future prospects appear bleak.

230 "Putin Meets with Experts in Sarov,"

231 Weitz, "*Déjà vu* with BMD," 9.

232 Ibid.

C. IMPLICATIONS FOR NATO

Russia's foreign policy behavior, including its reactions to U.S.-led BMD programs and its noncompliance with arms control agreements, has the potential to present security risks for NATO, but it also represents a political challenge for the Alliance. One security concern involves "rogue states" and the proliferation of ballistic missile technology. The U.S. EPAA is meant to combat the ballistic missile threats from these states, but in March 2013, Washington cancelled the fourth phase that was meant to counter ICBMs in a move that was seen as a concession to Moscow. These rogue nations could continue to develop ballistic missile technology to the point of having reliable ICBM capabilities. If the United States did not spend the resources to develop and deploy interceptors to counter those capabilities in advance, it would increase the threat to both Europe and North America. Further restrictions that affect the EPAA's other phases as well could also increase Europe's vulnerability to future missile strikes.

A second concern could arise from the Russian noncompliance with the INF Treaty, which would enable Russia to threaten European countries with intermediate-range missiles. The addition of such weapons to Russia's arsenal would not drastically increase the threat to Eastern Europe because these states are already within range of Russia's short-range missiles. If Iskander missiles were stationed in Kaliningrad and the range were increased by one to two hundred kilometers, the security environment would not fundamentally change.[233] Western Europe, however, would see more of a threat increase. Since "the elimination of the SS-20 dramatically reduced the threat to Western Europe," the deployment of such intermediate-range weapons would reintroduce that threat experienced during the Cold War.[234] Although NATO countries would see some increased risk, Jeffrey Lewis observes that, ultimately, "a handful of Russian intermediate-range nuclear forces do not change the fundamental military balance."[235] European countries have been vulnerable to nuclear strikes from Moscow since the

233 Sokov and Pomper, "Is Russia Violating the INF Treaty?"

234 Lewis, "Intercontinental Ballistic Missile."

235 Ibid.

1950s. Russian strategists have, no doubt, considered the potential political-military advantages of intermediate-range conventional land-based missiles, in addition to those of intermediate-range nuclear forces.

Russia's intermediate-range conventional and nuclear forces would present more political concerns than become a strategic game changer. Russia has the potential to undermine the political unity of the Alliance. Lewis states, "Moscow's ability to threaten capitals throughout NATO represents a challenge to the cohesion of the alliance."[236] A resurgent Russia brings up the fundamental concern on NATO's Article 5 security commitments. The Alliance's new members may worry that Western Europe would not risk nuclear war for the sake of one of the Baltic states, for example. Russia is "now more willing to flex its muscles," and has embraced "a neo-imperialistic attitude to an area of the world it still regards as its sphere of influence."[237] Moscow's policies on strategic missile defense and nuclear arms control will continue to test NATO's resolve.

236 Lewis, "Intercontinental Ballistic Missile."

237 Day, "Russia 'Simulates' Nuclear Attack."

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