Russian Strategic Deterrence

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Although many Western analysts are preoccupied with the likelihood of Russia plotting 'hybrid warfare' operations against NATO members, the concept itself is not an explicit part of Russian military doctrine. For Russian analysts, hybrid warfare is a Western construct.[1] A reading of Russian military–theoretical debates shows a preoccupation with a broader concept, which can be termed strategic deterrence (*strategicheskoe sderzhivanie*). This Russian concept is part of official doctrine and strategy, and understanding it is crucial to analysing current and future Russian security and defence policy.[2]

Strategic deterrence is the indigenous concept that encompasses what others call Russia's 'hybrid warfare doctrine', Russia's 'ability for cross-domain coercion' and Russia's 'nuclear brinkmanship'.[3] The Russian concept, which can be translated as 'strategic deterrence', is conceived much more broadly than the traditional Western concept of deterrence. It is not entirely defensive: it contains offensive and defensive, nuclear, non-nuclear and non-military deterrent tools. These are to be used in times of peace and war – making the concept resemble, to Western eyes, a combined strategy of containment, deterrence and coercion – using all means available to deter or dominate conflict. Strategic deterrence provides a guide to how Russia may seek to influence any potential adversary, including NATO, in the future. Russia's intention to conduct a Ukraine-style hybrid-warfare opera-

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tion against a NATO country is uncertain; its intention to deter NATO from encroaching on Russia's security interests is not.

The strategic-deterrence concept sheds light on the future division of labour between Russia's conventional and nuclear weapons, challenging the Western assumption that Russian nuclear weapons continue to have an elevated role in Russian strategy.[4] It depicts de-escalation as just one part of Russian deterrence thinking, and one that may be sought with the use of tools other than nuclear weapons. And it provides details on how non-military and military tools are combined in order to influence a potential adversary's assessment of Russia. This article seeks to understand what it means when official Russian documents state that 'Russia's strategic goals and defense policy will be realized through the use of strategic deterrence'.[5]

Before proceeding, a note on linguistic issues. The Russian language offers two terms for 'deterrence' – *sderzhivanie* (literally, 'restraining', 'keeping out' or 'holding back') and *ustrashenie* (literally, 'intimidation').[6] The former term is conceived much more broadly than the Western understanding of deterrence, to include all activities aimed at war prevention, including what in the Western lexicon is called 'containment'.[7] In other words, the subject of this article, Russian 'strategic deterrence', is much broader than its direct Western equivalent, both because of its linguistic roots and because, as will be discussed, the Russian concept has become more expansive in recent years. The second Russian term, *ustrashenie*, is more narrowly linked to nuclear capabilities. This term is normally used to portray the (implicitly illegitimate) deterrent policy of others, and contains certain negative associations, along the lines of 'nuclear blackmail'. A habitual phrase to describe US policies during the Cold War was '*sderzhivanie putem ustrasheniya*', or 'deterrence through intimidation'.[8] When describing its own policies, Russia to this day uses primarily *sderzhivanie*.

This article is based on insights from debates in Russian military theoretical journals, primarily *Military Thought*, the official journal of the Russian General Staff. The main contributors to this journal are senior officers and military academics, as well as some key members of the country's military leadership, including former chiefs of General Staff. Although the debates in this journal do not reflect classified elements of Russian military strat-

egy, they are likely to reflect the most pressing issues in Russian defence policy.

Russian deterrence thinking after the Cold War

As Russia's conventional capabilities deteriorated in the 1990s, Russia was forced to rely on deterrence, and particularly nuclear deterrence, in containing security threats. A tight coupling of Russia's nuclear weapons and its great-power status resulted in a situation in which any development that could undermine Russian deterrence was perceived to undermine Russia's position in the world.[9] Cardinal changes in the international military–political situation, such as technological development and Western military intervention, forced a review of the role of Russia's strategic weapons in global and regional deterrence.[10] Deterrence came to the forefront of Russian strategic thought – with a focus on maximising the utility of the tools available.

Several stages can be identified in the evolution of Russian post-Cold War deterrence thinking. The primary question for Russian theorists, since the demonstration of US airpower and precision-strike capabilities in the 1990s, was how to deter conventional threats with nuclear weapons. This focus was important in a period when Russia's own conventional capabilities were lagging significantly. The first stage in responding to this challenge, at least as observed by Western scholars, was the emergence of a theory of de-escalation. The theory first emerged in 1999 in a bid to make use of nuclear capabilities in the most efficient way possible against a conventionally superior adversary.[11] The need to compensate for conventional inferiority would not last forever, however, and in the 2000s, theorists started to focus on how nuclear and conventional capabilities could be used in combination – to more effectively deter both conventional and nuclear threats.[12] The term strategic deterrence became commonplace in this second stage of the evolution of Russian deterrence thinking. A third stage, starting from around 2010, saw an expansion of the thinking around strategic deterrence, to include non-nuclear and non-military components. Today, the limited efficiency of nuclear weapons in deterring conventional and non-traditional security threats is a given in Russian deliberations.[13] Doubts

about nuclear deterrence have contributed to the creation of a more comprehensive concept, aimed at offering Russia more than nuclear options to prevent and shape conflict.[14]

Official doctrinal documents and theoretical articles discuss the need to upgrade Russia's deterrent capabilities to meet contemporary security challenges.[15] Three challenges are highlighted. Firstly, American military–technological advances – specifically, prompt global strike and ballistic-missile defences – are perceived as part of an effort to achieve global military supremacy, and as a risk, therefore, to strategic stability.[16] These capabilities are perceived as undermining Russia's strategic nuclear forces.

Secondly, a number of non-military threats to Russian security have emerged in recent years. Threats to Russia's economic resource base and political cohesion (read: colour-revolution-style movements challenging the current regime), as well as threats in the informational and cultural sphere (such as the current emphasis on actively counteracting both disinformation campaigns carried out by foreign governments and the 'falsification of history'), are increasingly emphasised both in official rhetoric and in theoretical writings.[17]

This, in turn, is linked to the third challenge Russian observers highlight: the nature of modern warfare. Modern or 'new-generation' warfare is increasingly dominated and decided by non-military tools. New threats and challenges are forcing Russia to think creatively about how to counter them, and modern conditions provide a number of new opportunities in this regard.[18]

Strategic deterrence defined

'Strategic deterrence' is described in the military-encyclopaedic dictionary of the Ministry of Defence:

> A coordinated system of military and non-military (political, diplomatic, legal, economic, ideological, scientific–technical and others) measures taken consecutively or simultaneously … with the goal of deterring military action entailing damage of a strategic character … Strategic deterrence is directed at the stabilisation of the military–political situation

> … in order to influence an adversary within a predetermined framework, or for the de-escalation of military conflict … The objects to be influenced through strategic deterrence may be the military–political leadership and the population of the potential adversary state (or coalition of states) … Strategic-deterrent measures are carried out continuously, both in peacetime and in wartime.[19]

Although not an official definition, this comes across as a more or less unified definition in the Russian literature and official doctrine. Beyond this, no one source provides a complete and authoritative inventory of all the component parts of the concept, nor of how the concept should work. This article's attempt at making sense of the strategic-deterrence concept is therefore based on a range of different sources. The concept's component parts – nuclear deterrence, non-nuclear deterrence and non-military deterrence – will be portrayed here as they are presented in Russian official documentation and by different military theorists: as a patchwork of ideas and suggestions for how an overall strategic-deterrence concept should or could work.[20] The concept is still in development, and its usefulness is still debated among Russian theorists.[21] Nevertheless, this patchwork of ideas provides insight into how Russia may pursue its strategic goals in the future.

Nuclear deterrence

Nuclear deterrence, as carried out by both strategic and non-strategic nuclear forces, remains the most familiar component of the strategic-deterrence concept. In almost all descriptions, strategic nuclear weapons are seen as a cornerstone of current and future Russian strategic-deterrence policy.

Russia's nuclear weapons deter aggression by threatening to inflict unacceptable damage on any potential aggressor in a retaliatory strike. On a global scale, this entails the threat of a massive employment of strategic nuclear weapons capable of inflicting 'deterrent damage' on the military–economic potential of the aggressor in any conditions.[22] Non-strategic nuclear weapons could also be used massively to destroy enemy military forces and the economy of the aggressor, and hence deter conventional aggression. Beyond such massive use, the threat of limited nuclear use may also have a deterrent

effect. In the case of aggression or war, nuclear weapons could be used to de-escalate and terminate combat actions on terms acceptable to Russia through the threat of inflicting unacceptable damage upon the enemy.[23] Such limited nuclear use may deter both nuclear and conventional aggression. Although many Western analysts assume that non-strategic nuclear weapons are the most likely option for such limited use, most Russian analysts make no distinction between strategic or sub-strategic nuclear weapons in this regard. Moreover, the theory of de-escalation is still only elaborated in theoretical writings: it has never been explicitly mentioned in official military doctrine.

Reliance on the nuclear deterrence of both nuclear and conventional threats has been part of official Russian military doctrine since 2000.[24] Despite this, Russian theorists continue to debate how, and how well, nuclear weapons deter conventional threats. Some authors highlight the potential of demonstrative or de-escalatory nuclear use to deter conventional aggression.[25] Others claim that this mechanism is less than straightforward, as Russia's deterrent capabilities have been calibrated towards deterring global nuclear threats and none of the systems, from command and control to operational options, are calibrated for regional deterrence and limited use.[26] Others have worked out lists of criteria for when to use nuclear forces in response to conventional aggression and how Russia's mixture of capabilities affects this calculation.[27]

The idea is that the catastrophic consequences of even a limited nuclear strike would constitute damage so unacceptable that it would deter an aggressor in a large-scale conventional conflict. All these scenarios, however, entail an already evolving and escalated conflict on the conventional level. The challenge, as identified by many Russian theorists, is how to make the threat of even the limited use of nuclear weapons deter small-scale conventional confrontation on a regional or local level before the conflict becomes larger in scale.[28] This seems to be the key justification for Russian theorists' exploration of non-nuclear deterrence options.

Non-nuclear deterrence

The 2014 military doctrine introduced the notion of non-nuclear deterrence, defining it as 'a complex of foreign policy, military and military-technical

measures, aimed at the prevention of non-nuclear aggression against the Russian Federation'.[29] This was a change in policy on meeting conventional threats with nuclear weapons, representing the first official declaration that Russia needed more deterrence options. One former chief of the General Staff even said that Russia's elevated focus on nuclear weapons in the 2000s was an inefficient deterrence strategy.[30] In addressing this requirement, Russian theorists defined the main purpose of non-nuclear deterrent tools to be the deterrence of conventional, small-scale and political threats. Part of the reasoning was evidently also practical: a number of non-nuclear and non-military capabilities are increasingly becoming available to Russia, broadening policy options.

The military components of non-nuclear deterrence include conventional units and subunits equipped with strategic non-nuclear weapons on different platforms.[31] Offensive non-nuclear capabilities (such as precision weapons), defensive non-nuclear capabilities (such as the aerospace defence forces) and asymmetric options (such as special-operations forces) are all relevant capabilities with the ability to inflict unacceptable damage on an adversary and to fight a 'remote' war. They may therefore constitute a deterrent against conventional threats.[32]

Russian theoretical writings indicate that non-nuclear deterrent forces should play a role in deterring both global and regional conflicts. According to one definition,[33] regional deterrence lies in the threat of the massive use of non-strategic nuclear forces and strategic non-nuclear forces in any war against Russia or her allies, the result of which might be the destruction of the participant military forces and irreparable damage to the economy of the aggressor. Emphasis on the interchangeability of conventional precision weapons and non-strategic nuclear weapons is habitual: 'conventional weapons could carry out missions similar to those of nuclear weapons, such as demonstration strikes and limited strikes aimed at de-escalation, and also to take out objects of critical importance to the enemy'.[34] This also means that non-nuclear deterrent forces should be able to take over some of the current tasks of nuclear deterrent forces in the future.

Implicit in such claims is an assumption that non-nuclear deterrent capabilities may be sufficient to convince an enemy of the futility of the use of

force. Russian theorists certainly make the argument that the inclusion of conventional capabilities in the system of strategic deterrence enables a more precise assessment of predetermined damage. This, then, requires an assessment of both own and adversary vulnerabilities – including the adversary's pain threshold for unacceptable damage.[35] This line of argument demonstrates the seamless integration of conventional and nuclear forces that is habitual in Russian military thinking – a seamlessness that is intrinsic to the emerging strategic-deterrence concept.

Communicating what actions may cause retaliation constitutes a key element of deterrence strategy, and one in which Russia's expanded deterrence concept is deficient. Although certain parts of the non-nuclear deterrent force are well established, the mechanisms of non-nuclear deterrence are still debated. And whereas the use of nuclear weapons is doctrinally warranted in response to nuclear, biological or chemical weapons attack or 'when the very existence of the state is under threat' by conventional assault,[36] threats warranting a non-nuclear response remain unresolved in both theoretical and official writings. Although such ambiguity could be intentional, it is noteworthy that some 15 years after Russia doctrinally reserved a right to respond with nuclear weapons to conventional threats, there is continued debate over which threats might qualify. The way in which Russian theorists portray the evolving capabilities of potential adversaries goes some way toward explaining this. Moreover, improvements in Russia's own capabilities also encourage ongoing revision of the means by which deterrent effect is achieved.

Non-military deterrence

The least developed component of the Russian strategic-deterrence concept is the newest: non-military deterrence. The inclusion of non-military tools – 'political, economic, ideological, scientific measures', as per the military-dictionary definition – is an attempt to deal with what are essentially non-military challenges. Russian theorists appreciate the political nature of a number of the threats they believe they are facing – but fail to grasp the problems inherent in addressing these issues with the logic of deterrence. The key mechanism by which such tools can deter conflict remains unclear.

There is little detail in the theoretical writings on how non-military deterrence should work, beyond stating that the use of these tools will depend on the status of the aggressor state in the international system.[37] There is no deliberation of what kinds of action will cause non-military retaliation, nor of how exactly non-military tools will deter aggression against Russia. One reason for the absence of detail may be the vocational habits of the academics elaborating the concepts: they are all military officers.

If one were to think creatively, beyond the scope of military writings, one could argue that Russia's non-military tools could have deterrent utility. Russia has, with increasing success, used information operations in recent years, and such tools could be used to frame a conflict in the public domain, most obviously through portraying the adversary as the aggressor. Information operations could be used to create uncertainty or asymmetry in public debates regarding the logic of a particular conflict or confrontation. It might be possible, for example, to create an informational fait accompli on the ground in Russia proper, or in one of its neighbouring states, through the framing of NATO policy as aggression.[38] Alternatively, offensive cyber capabilities could be used to inflict what would be perceived as unacceptable damage on a developed, high-technology Western society, in the economic or political realm. For such non-military tools to deter action, however, capabilities and intentions would need to be more clearly demonstrated and communicated (as, indeed, certain theoretical articles highlight).[39] Lastly, once conflict had begun, one can easily envisage how non-military means could augment military tools to increase the pressure on an adversary and impact its calculations. Nevertheless, the uncertain deterrence mechanisms of non-military deterrence may cause misunderstandings of the Russian 'deterrent' language. Russian deterrent efforts may be perceived by an adversary as mere coercion or blackmail, triggering escalation rather than the intended reaction: that the adversary cedes to Russian demands.

An expansive concept

Theoretical elaborations of the Russian strategic-deterrence concept describe how a combined, coordinated toolkit would enhance Russia's deterrent capability. A broader range of deterrent tools are believed to provide more

opportunities to affect the opponent's calculus. In addition to the component parts, the system as a whole and the range of coercive tools Russia can bring to bear should instil fear in a potential adversary. The deterrent effect of nuclear capabilities should lend weight to non-nuclear deterrent capabilities, and non-nuclear capabilities are meant to provide Russia with the flexibility that nuclear weapons alone cannot provide. The possible pitfalls of conflating high- and low-level security risks in this manner are seemingly outmatched by the benefits offered by such an inclusive concept. In theory, strategic deterrence gives Russia a flexible system for containing and deterring conflict in peacetime and in times of increased tension, and for impacting the course of war.

The nuclear toolkit plays an important signalling role

In *peacetime*, potential threats can be identified and actively countered with the means deemed appropriate. Non-military and paramilitary tools are relevant when trying to contain or deter potential threats, such as the political and economic threats identified above. In addition, military tools are also described as potentially useful for peacetime signalling. In other words, the Russian deterrence concept prescribes the active use of tools normally reserved for wartime also in times of peace.

In times of *increased tension*, the strategic-deterrence concept gives the authorities room to expand the toolkit for use in signalling Russian resolve, beyond nuclear weapons. But the nuclear toolkit still plays an important signalling role, through increasing training, mobilisation, troop allocation or weapons dispersion.[40] Depending on the threat level, nuclear activity will be adjusted in order to try to decrease tensions. The large and diverse Russian strategic and non-strategic nuclear arsenal ensures a variety of signalling and deployment options, short of nuclear use. Russian theorists emphasise the particular suitability of these capabilities for demonstrating the gravity of a threat as perceived by Russia, and for influencing the adversary's behaviour accordingly.[41]

Non-nuclear deterrent forces add numbers and weight to the tools available for signalling, in terms of exercising and training, raising alert status, moving or deploying capabilities to particular areas, or demonstrating capa-

bilities. Modernisation of the Russian armed forces has resulted in an increase in the range of non-nuclear tools, and the concept of strategic deterrence envisages making use of these capabilities in a more systematic way, combining nuclear and conventional responses to nuclear and conventional threats.

Non-military tools provide further signalling options in periods of increased tension. Economic, informational or political pressure may be brought to bear on an adversary in an effort to affect the course of conflict at an earlier stage than when military means would be employed. The logic of de-escalation may also be expanded into the non-military realm if a demonstrated coercive capability, for example in the cyber domain, is significant enough. Thus, the Russian concepts of predetermined and unacceptable damage also seem relevant for assessing the utility of non-military tools, for both deterrent and coercive purposes.

In *war*, the strategic-deterrence concept promises an expanding range of policy options for Russia to affect the course of conflict. There is increased emphasis on combining tools: where military (nuclear and non-nuclear) tools could be used for signalling purposes, non-military tools could intensify pressure, demonstrating what Dima Adamsky calls cross-domain coercive capability.[42] The combination is intended to increase the likelihood that Russia can get what it wants and force an enemy to a conclusion of the conflict on terms acceptable to Russia. The question remains, however, whether the adversary will understand the message of deterrence in the way the Russian concept prescribes it.

Although non-nuclear deterrence is also part of Western deterrence thinking,[43] three unique features of Russia's strategic-deterrence concept stand out: its universality, its continuousness and its combining of deterrent and coercive logic.

The Russian deterrence concept is *universal* in that it seeks to deter all types of security threat with the use of all means available. It is a framework for formulating and implementing Russian strategy aimed at thwarting threats of different types at different levels, with the coordinated use of all the state tools Russia has available. It is not only about deterrence, it is about a comprehensive Russian approach to achieving its policy goals through the coordinated use of different means. It is about war prevention in the

broadest possible sense. And although Western debates in recent years have started to focus on cross-domain deterrence, Russians have been focused on this for decades. The Russian conception of deterrence was, from its onset, all-domain; Russian theorists are currently discussing how to capitalise on its unique features under modern conditions.

The second unique feature of the current Russian deterrence concept is its *continuousness*: it should work both in times of peace and war, 'from before hostilities start and until the (potential) massive use of nuclear weapons'.[44] This is due to the fact that the Russian deterrence concept also includes containment. The Russian term denotes that threats should be contained and deterred, not only by the mere existence of capabilities, but also by the active use of continuous counter-action – that is, countering the expanding influence of the adversary on Russia's periphery. A demonstrated or declared willingness to use a range of tools, regardless of whether Russia is in a state of peace or war, serves to blur the distinction between those two conditions. All options are always on the table, continuously. Most Western decision-makers distinguish between a condition of peace and one of war, a delineation impacting what policy options are available.

The third unique feature of the Russian deterrence concept is its *blending of the logics of deterrence and coercion* through its continued role in wartime. The Russian concept transcends a traditional perception of deterrence having failed if conflict erupts. It should continue to work 'in times of war to prevent escalation, to ensure de-escalation, or for the swift termination of conflict on terms acceptable to Russia'.[45] The Russian concept seeks more actively to influence wartime calculations through demonstrating Russian willingness to use coercive measures. One interesting aspect of this logic is how the need to *demonstrate* coercive capability increases as the destructiveness of the deterrent tools employed decreases. Whereas the sheer destructiveness of nuclear weapons means their mere existence should be enough to deter, non-nuclear and non-military tools in particular must be demonstrated or used coercively in order to deter a potential adversary.[46] The Russian term strategic deterrence is thus a clustered term used to describe all of the following: activities aimed at containing any threat from materialising against Russia; activities aimed at deterring any direct aggression against Russia;

and, lastly, activities focused on coercing an adversary to cede in a confrontation to terms dictated by Russia.

Is strategic deterrence useful?

Strategic deterrence is a theoretical attempt at making sense of the wide range of security-policy tools that Russia is developing and using. It can also be used as an analytical tool for observers to explain current Russian policies and statements. Take, for example, Moscow's strategic communications regarding its nuclear weapons. Asserting that Moscow may deploy nuclear weapons in Crimea seems gratuitous – as does pointing out the fact that the kinds of missiles used to take out 'terrorists' in Syria could also carry nuclear warheads.[47] Seen as part of the strategic-deterrence concept, it makes more sense, representing communication intended to 'stabilise the military–political situation' and reduce the likelihood of confrontation. Whether such communications are effective, however – and whether the message is received correctly – is another matter.

Russia's operations in Ukraine and Syria have demonstrated the broad range of tools that form part of the strategic-deterrence concept, as well as a willingness to use military force when Russian interests are at stake. Ukraine demonstrated non-nuclear and non-military tools such as special-operations forces, covert forces, and economic, political and informational means. Syria provided a demonstration of other non-nuclear capabilities, such as offensive and defensive air capabilities, and air- and sea-based precision-strike capabilities. All these tools are part of Russia's strategic-deterrence concept, components whose demonstration is a necessary stepping stone for them to effectively augment the deterrent effect of Russia's nuclear forces. And although it can be debated whether the operation in Syria is properly conceived as one containing, deterring or influencing threats against Russia, some Russian analysts have claimed that the conflict in Ukraine should provide lessons for improving the efficacy of the 'system of strategic deterrence', without elaborating further as to how exactly the concept was applied, or whether it worked in the Ukraine crisis.[48]

The strategic-deterrence concept is indicative of a changing balance between nuclear and conventional capabilities in Russian thinking, where

conventional weapons are reducing nuclear weapons' compensatory role. Nuclear weapons will no longer be Russia's only trump card in a confrontation with a conventionally superior adversary. It is not so much that nuclear weapons' role is diminishing, but rather that Russia's options are increasing. Nuclear de-escalation, although not officially embraced, is still debated theoretically as useful for deterrence and coercion purposes – a nuclear demonstration strike is, after all, a larger demonstration than one involving conventional cruise missiles. But an integrated system with a wide range of tools offers more flexibility – and the ability to adjust a response precisely to the perceived threat and to the importance of the stakes at play. This flexibility is designed to be useful in scenarios where Russia pursues limited goals and hopes to avoid unnecessary escalation.[49]

Russia cannot compete with adversaries such as NATO in all domains, and the strategic-deterrence concept is an acknowledgement of this symmetric shortcoming. By adopting a universal and continuous strategic-deterrence concept, Russia may be seeking to reduce the likelihood of a war by trying to actively influence the adversary in a number of domains at once. Moreover, Moscow seeks to play to Russia's advantage of conducting simultaneous and coordinated action.[50]

The Russian deterrence concept provides for pitching any Russian military or non-military effort as defensive measures. This terminology may deceive the Russian leadership into thinking that their actions are merely responding to perceived aggression. This does not resonate with the policies prescribed as part of the concept, some of which must be described as offensive and at times coercive. Russian strategic deterrence, in fact, seems least useful in actually *deterring* – that is, in reducing the likelihood of war, or providing strategic stability for parties other than Russia. Strategic deterrence may be comprehensive, but it is not internally coherent. It makes use of deterrent logic in areas of policy where this logic is ineffective. Existing Russian articles on the concept do not appreciate the reciprocal nature of deterrence relationships, and topics such as provocation, arms races or inadvertent escalation are not explored. Strategic deterrence thus fails to take into account the likelihood of deterrent action being interpreted offensively, causing escalation and triggering conflict.

A concept that conflates low- and high-level security threats and means to deal with them may prove to be a deceitful guide. The strategic-deterrence concept may falsely assure Russian leaders that they can effectively deter any security challenge. It may even create the illusion that a broad range of coercive tools can be employed for purely defensive purposes, making the world a safer place. Russia's deterrent language may thus become incomprehensible to potential adversaries – and misunderstanding, with dire consequences, may be the result.

Notes

1 See, for example, Samuel Charap, 'The Ghost of Hybrid War', *Survival*, vol. 57, no. 6, December 2015–January 2016, pp. 51–8.

2 See President of the Russian Federation, 'Voyennaya Doktrina Rossiiskoy Federatsii' [Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation], 2010 [hereafter '2010 Military Doctrine'], Section 27, point 6, http://rg.ru/2010/02/10/doktrina-dok.html; President of the Russian Federation, 'Voyennaya Doktrina Rossiiskoy Federatsii' [Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation], 2014 [hereafter '2014 Military Doctrine'], Section 12, point 26, https://rg.ru/2014/12/30/doktrina-dok.html; and President of the Russian Federation, 'Strategiya Natsional'noy Bezopasnosti Rossiiskoy Federatsii' [National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation]', 2015 [hereafter '2015 National Security Strategy'], Section IV, p. 9, points 34 and 36, http://static.kremlin.ru/media/acts/files/0001201512310038.pdf.

3 See, for example, Alexander Lanoszka, 'Russian Hybrid Warfare and Extended Deterrence in Eastern Europe', *International Affairs,* vol. 92, no. 1, 2016; Dmitry (Dima) Adamsky, 'Cross-Domain Coercion: The Current Russian Art of Strategy', *Proliferation Papers*, vol. 54, IFRI Security Studies Center, 2015, http://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/pp54adamsky.pdf; Lukasz Kulesa, Steven Pifer, Egon Bahr, Götz Neuneck, Mikhail Troitskiy and Matthew Kroenig, 'Forum: NATO and Russia', *Survival*, vol. 57, no. 2, March–April 2015.

4 See Nikolai Sokov, 'Why Russia Calls a Limited Nuclear Strike "De-Escalation"', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists,* 13 March 2014, http://thebulletin.org/why-russia-calls-limited-nuclear-strike-de-escalation; and Andrew Krepinevich and Jacob Cohn, 'Rethinking the Apocalype: Time for Bold Thinking About the Second Nuclear Age', *War on the Rocks,* 1 March 2016, http://warontherocks.com/2016/03/rethinking-the-apocalypse-time-for-bold-thinking-about-the-second-nuclear-age/.

5 President of the Russian Federation, 'National Security Strategy', 2014

Russian Military Doctrine, Section IV, point 34.

6 Henry Trofimenko, 'Changing Attitudes Toward Deterrence', *ACIS Working Paper,* no. 25, Center for International and Strategic Affairs, University of California, Los Angeles, July 1980, quoted in David Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 33.

7 'Containment' also translates into Russian as '*sderzhivanie*'. I am grateful to one of the article's anonymous reviewers for pointing this out. See also Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race*, p. 33.

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9 Matthew Rojansky, 'Russia and Strategic Stability', in Elbridge A. Colby and Michael S. Gerson (eds), *Strategic Stability: Contending Interpretations* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2013), pp. 295–342.

10 V.A. Sobolevskii', A.A. Protasov and V.V. Sukhorutchenko, 'Planirovaniie primeneniya strategicheskikh vooruzhenii' [Planning for the Use of Strategic Weapons], *Voyennaya Mysl'*, no. 7, July 2014, pp. 9–27.

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12 See S.V. Kreydin, A.A. Protasov and S.Y. Yegorov, 'Sistemy upravleniya voiskami (silami) kak instrument strategichsekogo sderzhivaniya' [The System for the Use of Forces as Strategic Deterrent Instrument], *Voyennaya Mysl',* no. 7, July 2009, pp. 8–11; and V.V. Matvichuk and A.L. Khryapin, 'Sistema strategichsekogo sderzhivaniya v novikh uslovyakh' [The System of Strategic Deterrence in New Conditions], *Voyennaya Mysl'*, no. 1, January 2010, pp. 11–16.

13 See V.I. Poletayev and V.V. Alferov, 'O neyadernom sderzhivanii, ego roli i meste v sisteme strategicheskogo sderzhivaniya' [Non-nuclear Deterrence in the Strategic Deterrence System], *Voennaia Mysl'*, no. 7, July 2015, pp. 3–10; and M. Khamzatov and Y. Baluyevskiy, 'Globalizatsiya i voyennoye dyelo' [Globalisation and Military Affairs], *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozrenie,* 8 August 2014, http://nvo.ng.ru/concepts/2014-08-08/1_globalisation.html.

14 See S.A. Bogdanov and S.G. Chekinov, 'Strategicheskoe sderzhivanie i natsional'naia bezopasnost' Rossii na sovremennom etape' [Strategic Deterrence and Russian National Security in the Contemporary Era], *Voyennaya Mysl'*, no. 3, March 2012, pp. 11–20; and A.N. Bel'skiy, D.A. Pavlov and O.B. Klimenko, 'Aktual'nye voprosy obezpecheniya voyennoy bezopasnosti Rossiiskoy Federatsii' [Current Issues Regarding the Provision of Russian Federation

Military Security], *Voyennaia Mysl'*, no. 1, January 2015, pp. 3–10.

15 See, for example, Bel'skiy, Pavlov and Klimenko, 'Current Issues Regarding the Provision of the Russian Federation's Military Security', pp. 3–10.

16 2014 Military Doctrine, Section 12, point G; and Section 21, point M.

17 See Bel'skiy, Pavlov and Klimenko, 'Current Issues Regarding the Provision of the Russian Federation's Military Security', pp. 3–10; 2014 Military Doctrine, Section 11; and 2015 National Security Strategy, Sections 43 and 79.

18 See, for example, Bogdanov and Chekinov, 'Strategic Deterrence and Russian National Security in the Contemporary Era', pp. 11–20.

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20 The Russian articles consulted for the purposes of this article use the terms 'concept', 'system' and 'framework' when discussing strategic deterrence. For the purposes of clarity, I use the term 'concept'.

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50 Elsewhere I have made the argument that the Russians may be better at doing this than the West: see Kristin Ven Bruusgaard, 'Crimea and Russia's Strategic Overhaul', *Parameters*, vol. 44, no. 3, Autumn 2014, pp. 81–90.