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**EVALUATING THE SUCCESS OF RUSSIAN HYBRID
WARFARE IN UKRAINE**

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By Gage A. Adam

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
completion
Of the Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies at the
Croft Institute for International Studies
The University of Mississippi

University, Mississippi
May 2017

Advisor: Dr. Joshua First

Reader: Dr. Yael Zeira

Reader: Dr. David Bath

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Gage Anthony Adam

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates Russia's use of hybrid warfare in Ukraine, and whether the endeavor was successful. In order for Russian hybrid warfare to have been successful, the costs and repercussions of their actions must not outweigh their achieved goals. For this thesis, it was assumed that Russia's goals are: locking NATO and the EU out of Russia's remaining sphere of influence, demonstrating Russian solidarity, gaining territory, and boosting popularity for the current administration. Russia was able to achieve all of these goals with the annexation of Crimea and use of military force in the Donbass region. The costs of these actions included high military spending, infrastructure costs and financial losses, and international backlash. This can be separated into the economic and political sector. Economically, Russia faces massive costs, which are sure to increase in the coming years, in an already weakened economy. Politically, Russia has been shunned by the West and now seeks closer ties with its eastern neighbors. While these costs are high, EU and NATO presence has not spread further West, Russia has shown its ability to act in the region, and Putin's popularity in Russia remains extremely high. With these factors in mind, it can be deemed that Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine was successful, although marginally so.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2014, Ukraine fell under attack from several different sources, including attacks on their economic security and unknown military personnel leading riots and taking control of buildings. These events were later attributed to Russia and called a hybrid war. To what extent has Russia's hybrid warfare in Ukraine been successful? For any actor to be successful, they must meet their goals while sustaining reasonable or expected losses. According to the Kremlin, Russia's only reason for intervening in Ukraine is to protect ethnic Russians. However, this thesis argues that some other motives may be inferred based on previous Russian actions. The events leading up to the hybrid war shed some light on what these motives may be. A major event that started the conflict in Ukraine, was the Euromaidan, a massive protest of the Ukrainian people. The Ukrainian people were looking to begin a partnership with the EU. The then Ukrainian president instead decided to reaffirm a partnership with Russia, leading to protests that would eventually turn violent. The EU and NATO both require a country to be in full control of its territory in order to gain member status. Further, neither organization wants to earn the ire of Russia by admitting a member that is currently in a conflict with Moscow. Thus, Russia was attempting to keep Western influence from its borders. The conflict has also been construed as a show of strength by the current Russian administration. Putin is able to show his government's control over the region, and how much he cares for Russians everywhere, earning him popularity with his citizens. By

contrasting these goals with the costs and repercussions that have followed Russia's hybrid war, I determine that Russia's hybrid war was relatively successful.

The definition of hybrid warfare differs slightly from scholar to scholar, but the most generally accepted definition is that put forth by the NATO Capstone Concept, which states that "hybrid threats are those posed by adversaries, with the ability to simultaneously employ conventional and non-conventional means adaptively in pursuit of their objectives."¹ The European Union defines a hybrid war as a situation where a country uses armed forces and a mix of other factors, such as economic or political.² Frank Hoffman, a security specialist, defines hybrid warfare as incorporating a range of different modes of warfare, including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder.³ While it is the most widely accepted, NATO's definition is very broad and leaves many questions with its definition. Conversely, Hoffman's definition cuts out much of the scope of what hybrid warfare can be. All definitions seem to agree that hybrid warfare combines conventional and non-conventional means. Conventional military is understandable enough, but non-conventional is left open ended without clarification. Non-conventional is the use of anything other than military force against another entity to achieve an objective. This would include cyber-attacks, impeding

¹ Michael Aaronson et al. "NATO Countering the Hybrid Threat." (*Prism* 2, no. 4 (2012)) 111-24. http://cco.ndu.edu/Portals/96/Documents/prism/prism_2-4/Prism_111-124_Aaronson-Diessen.pdf.

² Members' Research Services, "At a Glance", (European Parliament, 2015), accessed 3/20/17 [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2015/564355/EPRS_ATA\(2015\)564355_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2015/564355/EPRS_ATA(2015)564355_EN.pdf)

³ Frank Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*. Publication. Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies. 14.

industry, or covert operations, for example. A notable attribute of these means is that the effects are in plain view of the public, but allow the one responsible to wave off accusations. Putting these definitions together, hybrid warfare is war fought using multiple dimensions (e.g. the cyber, criminal, political, or economic) in concert with the military against an actor, state or non-state, in order to achieve a goal.

There are some who do not believe hybrid warfare to be a reality, such as Michael Kofman and Matthew Rojansky, who question whether or not hybrid warfare or threats are terms we even need in our vocabulary when discussing the issue. According to them, these threats have all been seen individually, and to term them as something new is to mislead the public⁴. Aaronson, et al. disagrees, and states that, while we may have seen all these threats before, we have never seen them used together as effectively as we do today. Using the article "Mif o 'gibridnoi voine'" (Myth of 'hybrid war') as a Russian perspective, it can be assumed that Russians would err on the side of Kofman and Rojansky. This article, by Ruslan Puhov, is in opposition to much of the Western literature, such as Hoffman's *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars* and, as the title suggest, calls hybrid war a myth and states that the actions dictated as being hybrid war are now standard in most military engagements⁵. Kofman and Rojansky do not disregard hybrid warfare to the extent seen in the article by Puhov. Instead, they claim that what is now being called hybrid warfare in regards to Russia is a series of

⁴ Michael Kofman, and Matthew Rojansky."A Closer Look at Russia's 'Hybrid War'." *Kennan Cable*, April 2015. Accessed September 18, 2016 http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/190090/ipublicationdocument_singledocument/81eee96d-e368-4b10-8f2e-4d801467a538/en/5-KENNAN_CABLE-ROJANSKY_KOFMAN.pdf

⁵ Ruslan Puhov. "Mif o "gibridnoi voine"" / Realii / Nezavisimaja gazeta. September 5, 2015. Accessed September 18, 2016 http://nvo.ng.ru/realty/2015-05-29/1_war.html

events that would be hard to replicate in any other conflict due to the circumstances and capabilities of Russia in the region. By naming them hybrid warfare and acting to protect itself, NATO and other international organizations have put fear into something that has not developed enough to warrant a reaction in any way.

Determining the successes and costs of hybrid warfare is important, as it gives some insight into where and when one might expect a hybrid threat to appear. Hybrid conflicts may vary from actor to actor, but the situations they are used in are largely similar, namely when one agent or state intends to engage in a conflict with another that is objectively stronger militarily or to avoid other consequences. Russia used this tactic in order to avoid some consequences from the international community. By determining whether Russia's hybrid war specifically is successful, it may be possible to determine whether Russia will use it again. Determining the costs plays a similar role. Comparing the perceived benefits of a hybrid operation and the associated costs could help to predict whether it is in Russia's, or possibly another actor's, interests to continue with the strategy of hybrid warfare. Some scholarship on the topic of the Ukraine Crisis, such as *Ukraine Crisis: What it Means for the West* by Andrew Wilson⁶, shed light on the relationship between Russia and Ukraine and how this relationship led to conflict and turmoil in the Donbass region. Richard Sakwa's *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands* does much the same, with more of a focus on Ukraine than Russia and the West.⁷ Neither of these works touches on the effect of hybrid warfare in the conflict itself. Wilson makes some note of hybrid warfare, but he does not linger on the subject.

⁶ Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis What It Means to the West*, New Haven: Yale 2014

⁷ Richard Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine Crisis in the Borderlands*, I.B. Tauris & Co. 2015

He briefly discusses why a hybrid war was favorable for Russia and some tools they utilized, but little else.⁸

Russia's hybrid warfare in Ukraine began in late February of 2014, following the events of Euromaidan. Armed men of an obviously military nature appeared on the Crimean Peninsula. These men did not identify themselves as part of any nation's army, nor did they wear any identifying insignia's. These men quickly took control of capital buildings in Simferapol and Sevastopol.⁹ This quickly led to the referendum for Crimea to join Russia, which many countries have refused to accept. Later in 2014, similar troops were found in the Donbass regions of Ukraine, taking control of important buildings and equipment, as well as leading separatist groups in the regions.¹⁰ This series of events falls under all definitions of hybrid warfare, as Russia did not need to use overt force to achieve its goals, and did not rely solely on any one irregular tactic. Instead, Russia used several pre-existing conditions in order to create chaos in Ukraine. The only forces present were officially unidentifiable and, in the Donbass region, were leading bands of Ukrainian rebels against their government. Media channels were not only seized, but were replaced. Russia used its control of hydrocarbon markets to further destabilize Ukraine. All these came together to create a conflict without an invasion ever being declared or any kind of identifiable war having begun.

⁸ Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, pg. 192

⁹ Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, pg. 110-111

¹⁰ Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, pg. 126

CHAPTER 1: CREATING THE HYBRID WAR IN UKRAINE

In order to determine the degree of success Russia has had in their use of hybrid war in Ukraine, we must first examine the variables that led to crises in Crimea and the Donbass. Moscow has taken similar actions (disinformation campaigns, invasions, shows of force) in the past against former Soviet Republics who wish to, or are, partnered with the West. Georgia in 2008 and the Baltics in 2013 serve as examples of this. However, neither of these instances had the same degree of preparation and varied tactics or had quite the same effect on the intended victim as the tactics used against Ukraine. In 2013, Russia put large military forces along the borders it shares with the Baltics for military training purposes. Many in the Baltics felt that this was a show of force against their joining NATO in 2004. In 2008, Russia began a war with Georgia over the status of the separatist region of South Ossetia.¹¹ In nations that have not attempted to turn West, Russia has used its existing political influence in the former Soviet Union to create the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), and integrate them into a trade network. This has allowed Russia to have more influence over these countries and prevents future attempts to join the EU and other economic or political organizations.¹² In Ukraine, Russia has

¹¹ Ott Ummelas and Aaron Eglitis, "Russian War Games on Baltic border spark security fears", *Bloomberg*, September 2013, accessed 1/21/2017 <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-09-20/russian-war-games-on-baltic-border-spark-security-fears>

Anne Applebaum, "Russia invades Georgia while the West watches", *Slate*, August 2008, accessed 1/10/2017 http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/foreigners/2008/08/world_inaction.html

¹² Jan Strzelecki, "Eurasian Economic Union: a time of crisis", *OSW*, February 2016, accessed 1/21/2017 <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2016-02-01/eurasian-economic-union-a-time-crisis>

adopted a different strategy, utilizing its own control of energy infrastructure and hydrocarbons as a weapon, and its capability to influence Ukrainian citizens through shared language and media in an attempt to convince the Ukrainian public not to trust their government. Through these variables Russia was able to begin a hybrid war.

Language has both divided and unified Ukraine since independence. Before 1991, Ukraine was under the control of other, more powerful nations and empires. These polities often sought to impose their own language on the people of Ukraine, as seen during Russification under the Soviet Union.¹³ Many Ukrainian speakers likely see their language as distinguishing themselves from Russians. So it stands to reason that those who speak Russian would identify more as Russians. As seen in Figure 3, those that both speak Russian and identify as ethnically Russian were more likely to agree with Russia's decision to intervene in Ukraine. Ethnic ties to Russia are already strong due to Ukraine's obvious proximity to Russia and the history they share. These ties are strongest in the oblasts of Southeast Ukraine, specifically Crimea, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kharkov, Kherson, Lugansk, and Zaporozhye. These regions are affected the most by Russian influence and culture, although most of these areas still have a majority population that identifies as Ukrainian.¹⁴ Crimea, Lugansk, and Donetsk are among those that have a larger than average percentage of people who identify as ethnically Russian. Crimea's larger than normal percentage of ethnic Russians made it the first target of hybrid tactics. Russian soldiers without insignia were able to take control and most likely

¹³ Anne Applebaum, "The Victory of Ukraine", *New York Review of Books*, 2016 <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2016/04/07/the-victory-of-ukraine/>

¹⁴ Nicolai Petro, "Understanding the Other Ukraine: Identity and Allegiance in Russophone Ukraine", *Ukraine and Russia: People, Politics, Propaganda, and Perspectives*, 2015, accessed 2/15/2017 <http://www.e-ir.info/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Ukraine-and-Russia-E-IR.pdf>

force a referendum. After the fact, Putin stated that this was done in an effort to protect Russians everywhere.¹⁵ This show of apparent concern for the region as well as a gratuitous show of force further bonded the Crimean people to Russia, while western regions were less responsive.¹⁶ The Donbass region does not have the same ethnic ties to Russia, but they do have a majority population who speak Russian, again going back to language. According to Serhy Yekelchyk, this adoption of the Russian language during the Soviet Era bonded the people of the Donbass to the USSR, and then to the Russian patriarchy following the USSR's collapse.¹⁷

Due to its history in the Soviet Union and the prominence of the Russian language, much of Ukraine's media in the south and east comes from Russia.¹⁸ . Moscow was able to use this influence over Russian speaking Ukrainians to promote their narrative of events in Ukraine. Disinformation campaigns like this are a key component of hybrid warfare, and serve to keep a society off balance or polarized. Russia is able to do this in Ukraine through Channels like Channel One and Russia 24 are state owned. Moscow has been able to do this to great effect in their own country, with government controlled mass media directly, and powerfully, influencing public opinion to suit the needs of the Kremlin¹⁹. Russian media spoke of the Ukrainian government killing its

¹⁵ 'Address by President of the Russian Federation', President of Russia website, 18 March 2014, accessed 3/21/2017 <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>

¹⁶ Boris Nemtsov, Ilya Yashin, Olga Shorina, *Putin. War*, <http://4freerussia.org/putin.war/Putin.War-Eng.pdf> pg. 13-15

¹⁷ Serhy Yekelchyk, *The Conflict in Ukraine What Everyone Needs to Know*, Oxford University Press 2015, pg. 116-117

¹⁸ Jill Dougherty, "Everyone Lies: The Ukraine Conflict and Russia's Media Transformation", Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics, and Public Policy, July 2014, accessed 3/2/2017 <https://shorensteincenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/d88-dougherty.pdf>

¹⁹ Dougherty, "Everyone Lies: The Ukraine Conflict and Russia's Media Transformation"

citizens in the Donbass region in a fashion similar to the holocaust, spurring more people to join the separatist cause and call for the regions autonomy.²⁰ Russian media also defames Western governments, specifically the United States, by stating that they are providing weapons to the “fascist” Ukrainian government, and citing pictures of past American transports in Latvia and Lithuania as America’s current involvement in Ukraine.²¹ Through reports like these, Russia attempts to convince Ukrainian citizens, specifically those that identify as Russian, that the Ukrainian government does not have their best interests at heart. Russian media and propaganda perpetuated the lie of separatists being only Ukrainian citizens for as long as possible, but after some months it became evident that Russians were leading the few Ukrainians in the conflict. Polls from 2014 show that only a small portion of Eastern Ukraine agreed with Russian intervention. In fact, the majority of Ukrainians in every region polled believed that it was unnecessary for Russia to send in troops. Figure 3 shows that even those that identify as ethnic Russians are divided as to whether or not Russian intervention is beneficial. The same percentage of people view the intervention as both favorable and unfavorable.²²

²⁰ Kim, “Putin waging information warfare in Ukraine”

²¹ Laas Leivat, “Russian Propaganda: Twisted, fabricated, insidious Estonian Life”, *Estonian World Review*, February 2015, accessed 1/10/2017 <http://www.eesti.ca/russian-propaganda-twisted-fabricated-insidious-estonian-life/article44443>

²² Baltic Surveys/Gallup Organization, “Public Opinion Survey Residents of Ukraine March 14-26, 2014”, March 2014, pg. 7 accessed 1/21/2017 <http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2014%20April%205%20IRI%20Public%20Opinion%20Survey%20of%20Ukraine.%20March%2014-26.%202014.pdf>

Do you support the decision of the Russian Federation to send its army to protect Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine?

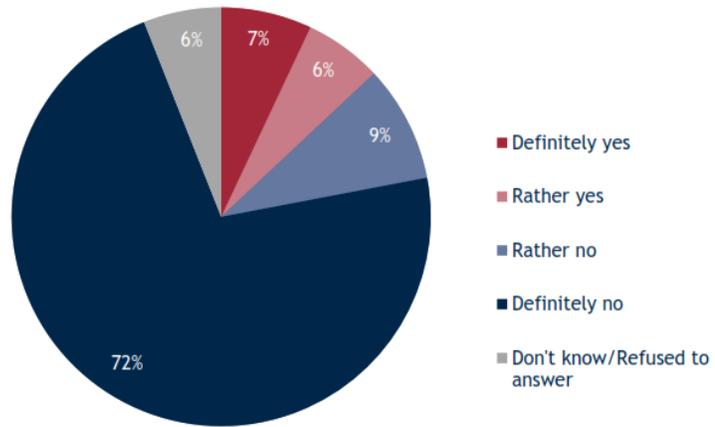


Figure 1

7

Do you support the decision of the Russian Federation to send its army to protect Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine?

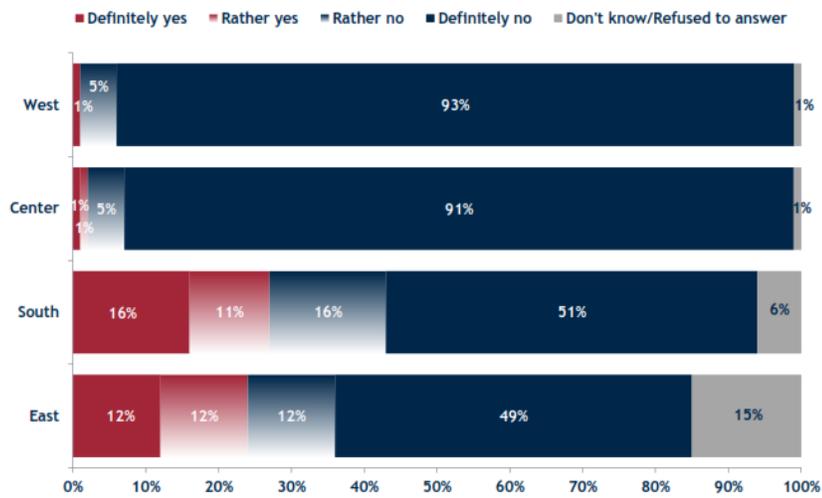
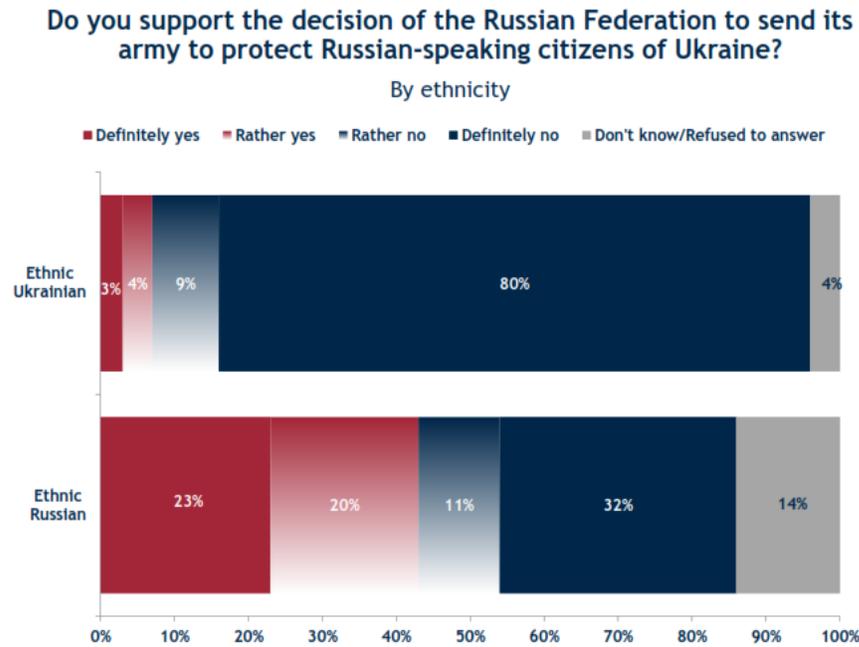


Figure 2

8



9

Figure 3

Source: Baltic Surveys/Gallup Organization, “Public Opinion Survey Residents of Ukraine March 14-26, 2014”, March 2014, pg.7
accessed 1/21/2017

<http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2014%20April%205%20IRI%20Public%20Opinion%20Survey%20of%20Ukraine,%20March%2014-26,%202014.pdf>

Russia has also exerted pressure on Ukraine’s energy sector, which has hurt the Ukrainian economy and made them ever more dependent on Russia. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine had its own effective hydrocarbon infrastructure, although it relied on its ties to Russia to make use of the capital in place. However, after becoming

independent from the Union, Ukraine's hydrocarbon producing industry has fallen into disrepair due to corruption, lack of modernization, and other organizational issues. This has led to a strong reliance on Russian natural gas.²³ Russia has used its dominance of the hydrocarbon market in order to severely damage the economy of Ukraine. This originally began in 2003 with Russia's decision to develop alternative pipelines to bypass Ukraine, and therefore bypass Ukraine's taxes (i.e., Blue Stream and Baltic Pipeline Systems).²⁴ This was followed by an increase in gas prices to Ukraine, meant to further destabilize the economy. Ukraine is heavily reliant on natural gas, and any increase in price will damage its economy. Ukraine was forced into an agreement with \$485 per thousand cubic meters in April of 2014, while Germany and other European countries paid over a hundred dollars less per thousand cubic meters.²⁵ This was the climax of Russian price escalation that began in 2005. Between the years of 2010 and 2013, Ukraine was paying roughly the same amount annually as Germany, a country with a much higher demand for resources.²⁶ A few months after the final price agreement was struck, Russia ceased sending any gas at all to Ukraine. The coal industry in Ukraine was subsequently destroyed, as separatists took control of or destroyed much of the necessary infrastructure, likely under the suggestions of Russian military officers or government officials. Had it not been for the relatively warm winter, things may have been much

²³ Jeffrey Tayler, "Russia Raises Natural Gas Threat against Ukraine", *National Geographic*, March 2014, accessed 1/21/2017 <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/energy/2014/03/140303-russia-natural-gas-threat-against-ukraine/>

²⁴ Mykhailo Gonchar, Andriy Chubyk, & Oksana Ishchuk, "Energy Component in New Generation Warfare," (Center for Global Studies "Strategy XXI": "Antare Project," August 2015, accessed 10/16/2016 http://geostrategy.org.ua/images/August_2015_Hybrid_Aggression_final.pdf

²⁵ Nataliia Slobodia, "Energy Instruments of hybrid warfare", *Stratfor*, March 2016, accessed 1/19/2017 <https://www.stratfor.com/the-hub/energy-instruments-%E2%80%9Chybrid-warfare%E2%80%9D>

²⁶ Gonchar, "Energy Component in New Generation Warfare"

worse. Even so, Kiev found it necessary to implement rolling blackouts and lessen the power consumption of some industries.

Russia was able to damage more than just the current Ukrainian economy through its control of the energy sector. Russia has slandered Ukraine with accusations of gas theft and refusal to pay owed debts in 2009, followed by Russia turning off the transport of gas through Ukraine. This hurt not only Ukraine, but also Europe and Russia itself, as Ukraine held the one pipeline between the two. Russia used accusations and its refusal to sell to show Europe that Ukraine was an untrustworthy partner. Construction of pipelines that bypass Ukraine are also a constant threat to the country. Russia already transports half as much gas through Ukraine than it did in the last decade. Should Russia choose to abandon the Ukraine pipeline altogether, Ukraine would become nearly obsolete as a political or economic partner to both Russia and Europe. Lack of gas and a large portion of the country's income could force Ukraine to give in to Russian demands, and possibly hand over control of its government altogether.²⁷

Finally, Russia leveraged considerable political control over the government of Ukraine. The events of Euromaidan in 2013-2014, which was the spark for the Ukraine crisis, can be somewhat attributed to Russian power over influential figures in Ukrainian politics. The president at the time, Victor Yanukovich, was a Russian leaning politician who had been given the choice between moving towards the West and signing an EU association agreement, or reaffirming ties with Russia by taking a loan bailout and beginning the process of joining the EAEU. Popular support was for the EU agreement, and Yanukovich had declared that he would sign for the EU. However, he broke his

²⁷ Tayler, "Russia raises natural gas threat against Ukraine"

word and suspended talks with the EU, leading to the protests that would soon turn deadly²⁸. He has since fled to Russia and possibly been given Russian citizenship under suspicious circumstances. Yanukovych's decision can most likely be attributed to Russian pressure and incentivizing. The Eurasian Union has much fewer standards for entry when compared to the EU, as it serves less as an economic union and more as a stronger bond between Russia and the other members. By contrast, the EU has several qualifications that need to be met in full before a nation can be considered for assessment, eventually leading to membership. These high standards are the reasons so many eastern European countries have found trouble joining the organization. The deal offered by Russia would also provide much needed short term relief for the Ukrainian government and economy by removing some of the Russian debt that Ukraine had accrued²⁹. It has been speculated however, that the long term benefits of any agreement with the EU would far outweigh any of the short term promises made by Moscow. Ukrainian industry would suffer for some few years as it adapted to the more favorable European industries competing for trade, but would eventually see large profits due to access to new technologies and markets it would never have. Many Ukrainians, possibly 50% or more, saw the better standards of living and more democratic countries in Europe as a positive, as well as it effectively removing Ukraine from Russia's sphere of influence. The most plausible reasons for Yanukovych choosing Russia's deal are short-sightedness and his

²⁸ Serhiy Kudelia, "The House that Yanukovych Built", *Journal of Democracy*, July 2014, accessed 3/2/2017 <http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Ukraine-25-3.pdf>

²⁹ Katelyn Ferral, "On the Brink: Viktor Yanukovych's Decisions and the Ukrainian Retreat from Europe", *University of North Carolina*, 2014, pg. 29-31, accessed 3/2/17 <https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/indexablecontent/uuid:405c11d5-cddd-4a63-855e-4301352740e4>

own predisposition towards, as well as pressure from, Russia overriding the wants of his own people³⁰.

³⁰ Judy Woodruff and Steven Pifer, “Why did Ukraine’s Yanukovich give in to Russian pressure on EU deal?”, PBS Newshour, December 2013, accessed 3/2/2017 http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/world-july-dec13-ukraine2_12-02/

Ferral, “On the Brink”

CHAPTER 2: ECONOMIC LOSSES SUSTAINED BY RUSSIA

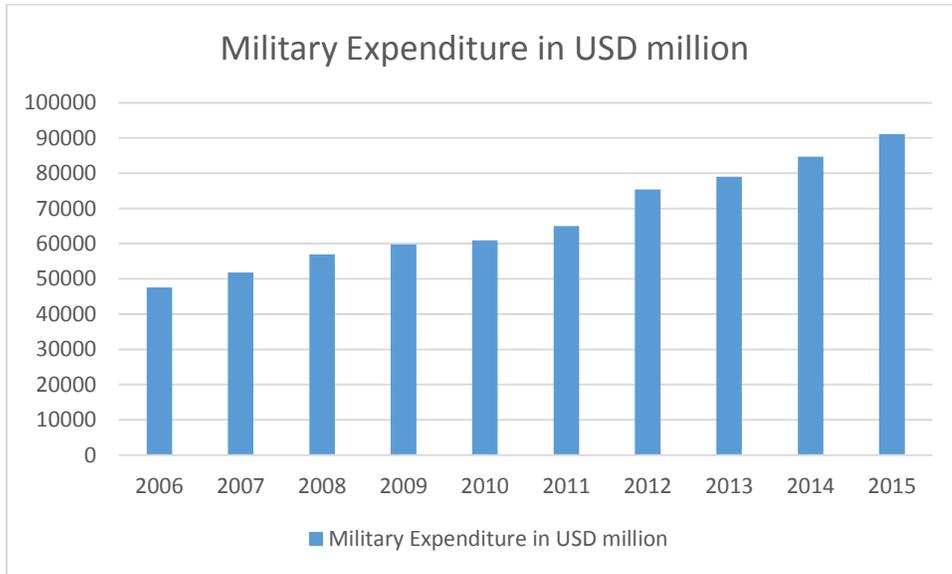
Russia's actions in Ukraine have had an effect on their own side of the border, notably in their finances. Any conflict has its share of financial costs, but many of Russia's come from non-traditional expenses. In a normal conflict, both sides would have considerable military expenditures. Russia would have also faced considerably more backlash than economic sanctions, as the international community would have more evidence to base their decisions on. However, Russia's multi-pronged strategy of hybrid warfare has multiple price tags attached, while simultaneously allowing them to act without fear of military or grave political repercussions. Not only has Russia had to pay for increased military, both their own and any supplies they may or may not have given to Ukrainian separatists, but there are also the costs associated with annexing Crimea and the sanctions that followed. Where a modern war would have involved increased spending on weaponry, Moscow has likely spent more paying families to agree not to talk about how family members in the military died. Due to the nature of hybrid war, all Russian personnel acting in Ukraine have to be paid under the table, likely at an increased rate, as well as anyone who maintains contact with them. For a limited, short-term engagement, hybrid warfare may have been more cost-effective, but as time has dragged on and more Russian soldiers have been killed in action, the cost of keeping involvement unknown has increased. Moscow not only has to pay the military under the table, but possibly pro-Russian protesters and rioters.

By assessing the financial drawback of Russia's strategy, it can be determined whether or not Russia has overspent on the conflict, which will help in determining whether or not hybrid warfare was successful in the conflict in Ukraine. The three most prominent costs are those of the military, both overt and anonymous, the present and future price of Crimea, and the sanctions that were imposed afterwards.

Determining the financial cost of military assets that Russia has invested in Ukraine is no easy task, largely because of the disinformation spread by Russia and Moscow's unwillingness to be forthcoming about both their actions in Ukraine and the full extent of their military. Multiple sources of data could give some insight into how much Russia has spent on the military dimension of their hybrid conflict in Ukraine. Russia's military budget is one such source, however, we cannot know whether the reported amounts are accurate or not, as multiple organizations, such as the International Institute of Security Studies and Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) estimate that Russian defense spending is generally higher than the reported defense budget. The goal of looking at Russian military expenditures through the years is to see whether there is an uncharacteristic increase in military spending due to the Ukraine crisis. This spike in expenditures could then be attributed to the conflict itself.

Information from Trading Economics (which uses data from World Bank) shows little variation in military spending. As evidenced in Figure 4, the general trend here appears to be approximately a 5-6000 increase per year in USD million. This seems to be the consensus, as Figure 5 shows the same data presented by SIPRI. We would expect an increase in the years 2014 or 2015 to show an increase in military spending due to the

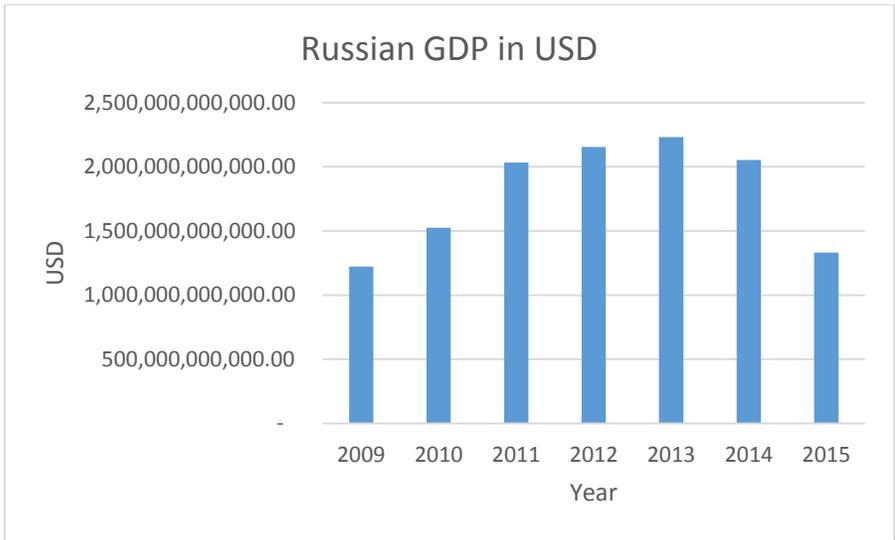
Ukrainian conflict. From this information, we cannot conclude that Russian military spending has increased any more than it would have without the Ukrainian conflict.



Source: SIPRI Milex Data 1998-2015, pg. 20 <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/Milex-constant-USD.pdf>

Figure 4

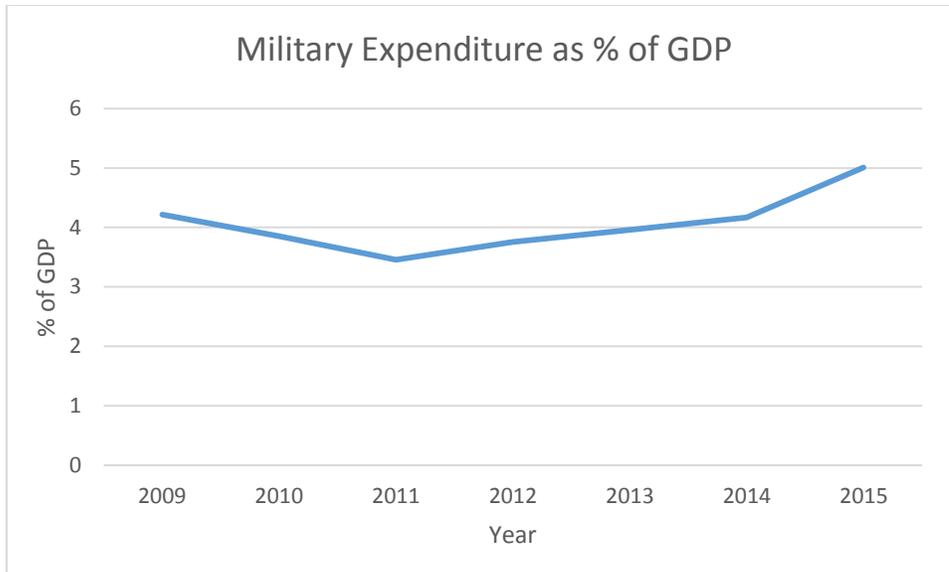
Viewed apart from Figure 4, Figures 5 and 6 seem to tell a similar story. We see an increase in military expenditures as a percentage of GDP as GDP falls harshly in 2015. So, it would be easy to assume that military expenditures could stay the same and still see an increase in % of GDP. However, when we take all the figures into account, the continued increase in military spending as GDP falls makes less sense, especially when compared to the years 2009 and 2010 where military expenditures fell as Russia recovered from the 2008 market crash.



Source: World Data Bank, Russia GDP per year in USD, 2009-2011, accessed 3/15/2017

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2015&locations=RU&start=2009>

Figure 5



Source: World Data Bank, Russia Military Expenditure (% of GDP), 2009-2011, accessed 3/15/2017
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?end=2015&locations=RU&start=2009>

Figure 6

However, there is not enough evidence to confirm that the increase in military spending as Russian GDP falls is directly linked to Russia's use of military forces in Ukraine. This is because changes in overall military expenditures usually increase in preparation for a military conflict and during a standard military conflict. Russia may have been preparing for a situation like what is happening in Ukraine, however, this is not a standard symmetric military conflict. Instead, Russia is using limited military forces. Furthermore, Moscow kept all Russian involvement in Ukraine secret until late 2014, and even then few details were released. It then stands to reason that Russia could, and most likely would, hide any irregular military expenses. So, in order to estimate Russia's expenses in the Ukraine conflict, estimates must be made based on what armaments and training are reported as being supplied by Russia.

This information has already been looked into by multiple interested parties and economists, such as Boris Nemtsov and Andrey Illarionov. According to Nemtsov's "War. Putin", the Russian government spent an estimated total of 53 billion rubles on various forms of military and upkeep for ten months of the conflict. In addition to that is the 80 billion rubles spent on pro-Russian separatists in Eastern Ukraine. In the report, Nemtsov stated that he knew of nearly 220 Russian soldiers who died in Ukrainian conflicts from late 2014 to early 2015. He goes on to say that the families of the soldiers received 2 million rubles to not disclose the reasons for the deaths of the soldiers. Added on to this is the inevitable costs of refugees. In every war there are those who are misplaced, and this one was no different. Nemtsov estimated that Russia had payed near 80 billion rubles by July 2014.³¹

Costs could be even higher according to Russian economist, and Putin's former economic policy advisor, Andrey Illarionov. He puts the cost of the war at nearly 94 billion US dollars, about 5 times as much as the cost estimated in "War. Putin,". He gives several reasons for the steep difference:

"all military expenditures in the war against Ukraine are much higher than the direct costs of carrying out military actions directly on the territory of Ukraine."

"spending on the preparation and conduct of the war with Ukraine began long before the start of military operations against Ukraine."

"the current war begun by the Kremlin is a war not only with Ukraine."

³¹ Anna Dolgov, "Nemtsov report Details human and financial costs of war in Ukraine", *The Moscow Times*, 05/12/15 accessed 11/18/2016 <https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/nemtsov-report-details-human-and-financial-costs-of-war-in-ukraine-46471>

“additional costs in connection with the preparation and conduct of military operations are born not only by the state budget but also by the private sector.”³²

And because of these reasons, he believes Nemtsov’s report to be incorrect. As an economist, he does not report on the human and property cost of the war, but he goes into much greater detail with his estimate. Because Russian rearmament began in 2011, the increased GDP expenditure on the military must also be included. So, the cost for Russia’s hybrid war in Ukraine could be anywhere between 20 billion and 94 billion US dollars.

Russia also faces the cost of annexing Crimea from Ukraine. Not only has Russia taken on the financial burden of adding another region, but Moscow made promises in 2014 to Crimea, which will be costly to implement. These promises are not direct costs of hybrid warfare, but are consequences of its use and must be taken into consideration. Russia’s use of political maneuvering, “little green men” (the term used for unidentified soldiers in Crimea and the Donbass), and ethnic ties all effectively led to the annexation of Crimea. If Russia continues to use hybrid warfare in a similar fashion, then infrastructure costs and promises made will continue to be expensive issues for Moscow.

When Moscow annexed Crimea, it pledged to double state pensions for Crimea, adding up to an estimated 36 billion rubles annually. Moscow also promised to raise wages of state workers to the Russian standard, which was estimated to cost 30 billion rubles a year. The Russian government has also set aside an annual subsidy to Crimea.

³² Paul Goble, “Putin’s wars already costing Russia ~100 billion US dollars a year, Illarionov says”, Euromaidan Press, 10/11/15 accessed on 11/18/2016 <http://euromaidanpress.com/2015/10/11/putins-wars-already-costing-russia-100-billion-us-dollars-a-year-illarionov-says/>

These expenditures combined for 2014 were approximately 55 billion rubles. In addition to these payments, Russia stated its interest in reducing Crimean dependence on Ukraine. The first step in doing so is the construction of a road and railway bridge connecting Russia and Crimea. The cost of this was estimated at 100 billion rubles in 2014. Reducing dependence on Ukrainian energy would also prove costly. The Russian energy minister stated that it would cost up to 100 billion rubles build three power stations in Crimea. Possible gas pipelines between Russia and Crimea could cost anywhere between 200 million and a billion US dollars. Prices that weren't estimated for 2014 include Russian plans to upgrade schools, hospitals, agriculture and other important infrastructure within Crimea. According to the Finance minister of Russia, Moscow spent approximately 243 billion rubles to support Crimea in 2014 alone. This sum includes both annual spending and one time expenditures, such as infrastructure expenses. The funds to pay for all of these has been coming from similar programs within Russia, meaning that not only is the Russian government facing financial deficits, but the Russian people are having their similar programs redistributed to Crimea.³³ Russia reported a GRP of 155 billion rubles from Crimea in 2014, meaning that Crimea's production only accounts for two thirds of its cost to Russia. The reported GRP is only estimated data, and only accounts for March through December of 2014. It is very unlikely that the unaccounted months are able to close the annual deficit, let alone make up for the structural costs. Added to this amount is the inevitable bill for Ukrainian lawsuits. Covered under these lawsuits is the seizure of Ukrainian property and the breaking of

³³ Boris Nemtsov, Ilya Yashin, and Olga Shorina, "Putin. War", Free Russia Foundation, <http://4freerussia.org/putin.war/Putin.War-Eng.pdf>

recognized agreements. The uncertainty that follows these proceedings has led to investors pulling away from Crimea, hurting Russia even more.³⁴

Russia's annexation of Crimea and actions in Ukraine have also led to an expensive international backlash. The EU and the United States have placed several rounds of sanctions on Russia, and Canada, Japan, New Zealand, and Australia have followed their example.³⁵ The sanctions placed by the United States and Europe were very similar, and began by targeting key individuals connected to Putin by freezing assets and placing travel bans. When this proved largely ineffective, sanctions were placed on the energy sector, keeping American and European energy companies from working with Russian companies. Sanctions were also placed on Russian banks, shortening payment deadlines to 30 days and prohibiting financial help from European and American banks. Sanctions were then placed on the defense industry in Russia. Some of Russia's military and defense sector was not allowed access to financing, equipment, information, and other materials related to the industry³⁶. Finally, the EU and United States banned their companies from doing business in Crimea in an effort to put stress on the peninsula.

³⁴ Jason Bush, "Factbox- Costs and assets from Russia's annexation of Crimea", *Reuters*, 04/08/14, accessed 10/17/16 <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-ukraine-crisis-crimea-costs-factbox-idUKBREA370NY20140408>

³⁵ Wan Wang, "Impact of Western Sanctions on Russia in the Ukraine Crisis", *Journal of Politics and Law* Vol. 8 No.2, pg. 1, 2015 accessed 3/4/2017 <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.1028.3835&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

³⁶ Wang, "Impact of Western Sanctions"

Leigh Hansson, Michael Lowell, Sian Fellows, David Myers, Alexandra E. Allan, Alexandra Gordon, Hena M. Schommer, Laith Najjar, *Overview of U.S. and EU Sanctions on Russia*, ReedSmith, October 2014, accessed on 12/2/16 https://www.reedsmith.com/files/Publication/9221cf81-e4f7-4907-ab2c-f7dc249eac58/Presentation/PublicationAttachment/441e0ec9-dbd8-4c3a-b1fa-0bf7ed4d5872/alert_14-255.pdf

According to Wan Wang, a scholar from Beijing Normal University, the sanctions were extremely effective in damaging the Russian economy, but had different effects on domestic sentiment, which will be discussed later on. According to Wang, the falling price of oil combined with the sanctions led to shrinking federal reserves, \$416 billion as of February 2015, as well as a large amount of capital outflow between 2014 and 2015³⁷, which is evidenced in Figure 7 from Trading Economics³⁸.



Figure 7

According to Wang’s article, there are multiple ramifications of these sanctions. The Russian government is estimated to lose \$4-5 billion per year sanctions are in effect, Russia’s credit rating has fallen to a lower level, GDP growth was negligible with sanctions in effect, and sanctions over a long-term period would limit modernization in Russia due to a lack of technology and investment inflow³⁹.

³⁷ Wang, “Impact of Western Sanctions”

³⁸ Trading economics

³⁹ Wang, “Impact of Western Sanctions”

CHAPTER 3: POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF RUSSIA'S ACTIONS IN UKRAINE

Public feeling towards the Russian government has been deeply affected by Russian actions in Ukraine. Those within Russia have been told that the government acts for the best interests of Russians across the globe and support Putin with a renewed vigor. Even as international sanctions damn Moscow's actions, many Russians believe that the government has acted well within their rights and in the defense of all Russians. Some of this reaction may come from Russia not declaring a formal war. Societies, in general, tend to react negatively to any declaration of war. Using hybrid warfare, the Kremlin was able to avoid this decline in public opinion, while still engaging in damaging operations. On the other hand, Russia has lost any popularity it had among Western nations with its hybrid war in Ukraine. Because of the damage Moscow was able to cause through hybrid warfare without any formal military engagement, NATO members such as the Baltics are especially fearful. It is possible that NATO's Article V will not constitute a military engagement under hybrid war, meaning that the Baltics could be at great risk should Russia decide to use it against them. Because of the threat from Russia, NATO has taken steps to defend its members from any possible attack, causing further tensions on Russia's western border. This reaction differs from that of a normal military intervention or engagement, as NATO would have been justified in positioning far more soldiers and equipment along their eastern border. Were NATO to do that now, Russia

would be able to spin it as proof of NATO aggression and further their disinformation campaign against the West. Since the West has reacted poorly to Russian actions, Moscow has turned to the East to find allies and partners, specifically China.

By considering these political ramifications of Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine, I can determine whether Russia, as well as the Russian administration, has experienced a positive political or environment, or an environment that often condemns Moscow's actions and has led to political problems for Russia. It may prove that Putin's administration has gained while the rest of Russia faces losses.

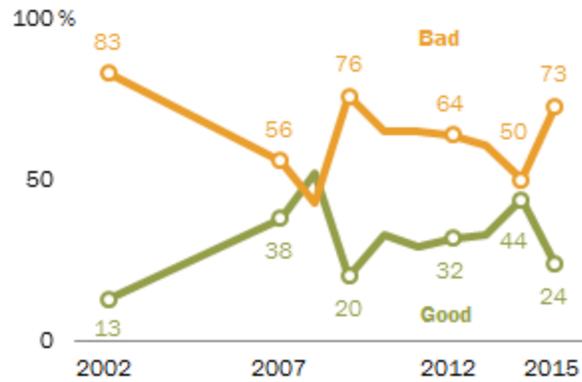
Domestic Effects

One would expect the recession that followed the events in Ukraine to have turned domestic sentiment against the Russian government as citizens faced increased prices and economic hardships. However, it seems the opposite is true. The recession that followed Russia's actions in Ukraine was met with increased support for the Putin administration⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ Katie Simmons, Bruce Stokes, and Jacob Poushter, "Russian Public Opinion: Putin Praised, West Panned", Pew Research Center, 2015, accessed 3/8/2017 <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/06/10/2-russian-public-opinion-putin-praised-west-panned/>

Russian Views of Economy Souring

How would you describe the current economic situation in Russia?



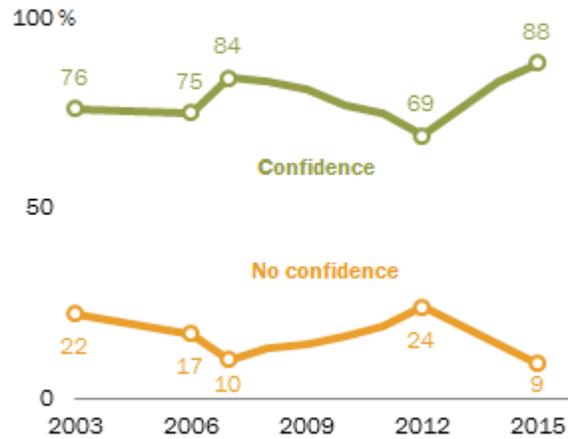
Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey, Q3.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 8

Russian Confidence in Putin at New High

Confidence in Putin to do the right thing regarding world affairs



Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey, Q25d.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 9

Based on Figures 8 and 9, confidence in Putin has been on the rise since his election in 2012. One would expect that confidence in Putin would be affected by severe economic changes, especially those with as many negative repercussions as the fall in oil prices and international sanctions. But the opposite appears to be true. In fact, data from the Pew Research Center shows that a large majority of Russian citizens approve of his handling of the Russian economy specifically (Figure 10). This data corresponds with Levada-Center polls, however, Levada-Center also shows that Russian approval of the government is only at 43%, with the disapproval rating at 55% as of March 2017.⁴¹ This further establishes that Putin has made gains politically while the image of the Russian government as a whole has been damaged.

Putin has also gained approval based on his handling of international relations. Figure 10 demonstrates that a sizeable majority of Russian citizens firmly support Putin's actions regarding Western countries and organizations. Based on this poll, Russians have no interest in seeking closer relations with the United States or members of the EU. It may be that Russian citizens feel this way because blame for violence in Ukraine has been laid at the feet of the West. Media in Russia has blamed the United States and NATO for encouraging Western expansionism, which has led to Russia having to reaffirm its influence in the area as a defensive measure⁴². Russians also overwhelmingly support Putin's handling of relations in Ukraine. Many within Russia believe Ukraine to be a part of Russia, which may explain some of the support for Russia's actions in

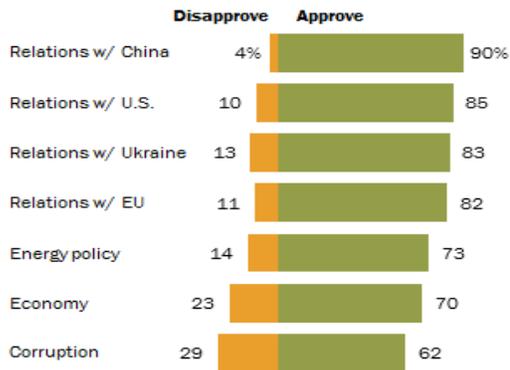
⁴¹ Levada-Center, Indicators – Approval of the government, accessed 4/19/2017 <http://www.levada.ru/en/ratings/>

⁴² John Mearsheimer, “Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West’s Fault”, Foreign Affairs Vol. 93, No. 5, pg. 77, accessed 3/10/2017 http://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/fora93&div=111&g_sent=1&collection=journals#

Ukraine. Overall, these feelings could be influenced by what has been called a rise in Russian nationalism over the years. In the past 5 years, favorable opinion of America, Germany, the EU, and NATO have all fallen by at least half. At the time of polling, nationalism within Russia was very high, with 90% of those polled having a favorable opinion of their country⁴³. With the public supporting nationalist ideas such as this, it is little wonder why Moscow has seen to fit to use hybrid warfare to control the region.

Russians Overwhelmingly Support Putin's Foreign and Domestic Policies

Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Vladimir Putin is handling ...



Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey, Q81a-g.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 10

International Repercussions

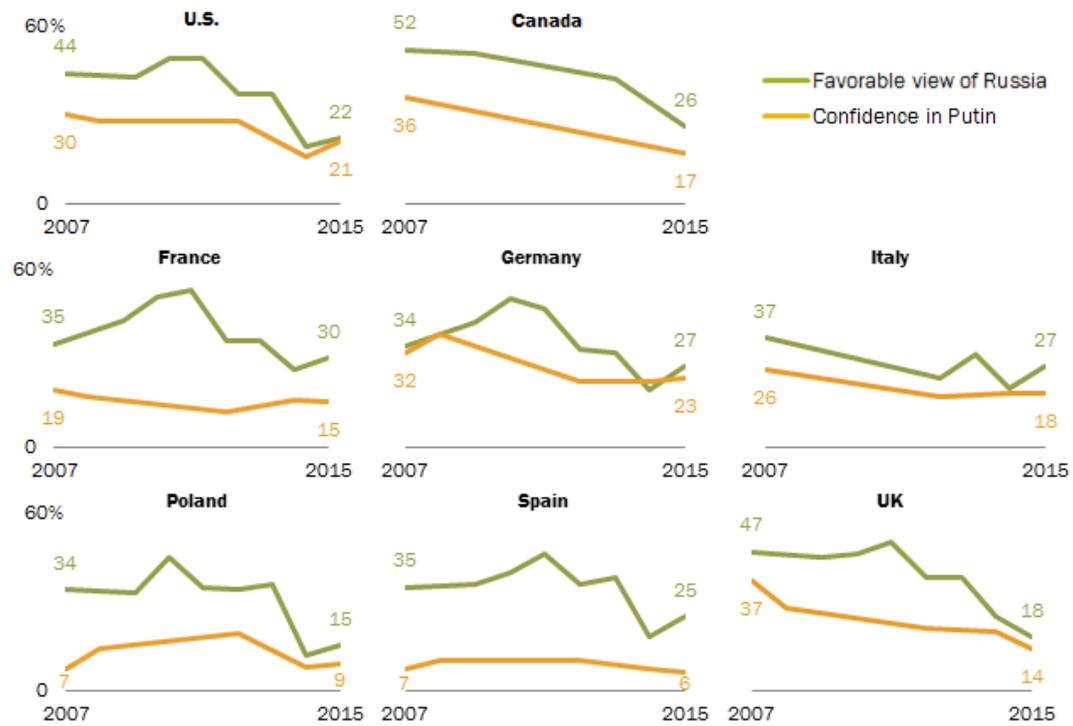
Russians' view of their economy is the only public opinion that seems to have changed drastically due to incidents in Ukraine and following events. Putin's popularity has continued to climb, as opinion for the West declines. International opinion of the

⁴³ Simmons, "Russian Public Opinion"

Russian government shows a more dynamic reaction to intervention in Crimea and the Donbass. A poll of eight countries seen in Figure 11 (US, Canada, UK, Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Poland) in 2014, shows that opinion of Putin and Russia plummeted after events in Ukraine. Opinion of Russia overall had been on a general downward trend in many of these countries, but in each case there was a decrease in confidence in Russia between 2013 and 2014⁴⁴. As the polls were conducted between April and May each year, public opinion would reflect how the international community reacted to Russia's use of hybrid warfare in Ukraine in the early months of their involvement.

⁴⁴ Katie Simmons, Bruce Stokes, and Jacob Poushter, "NATO Public Opinion: Wary of Russia, Leery of Action on Ukraine", Pew Research Center, 2015, accessed 3/10/2017 <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/06/10/1-nato-public-opinion-wary-of-russia-leary-of-action-on-ukraine/>

NATO Views of Russia and Putin Both Negative



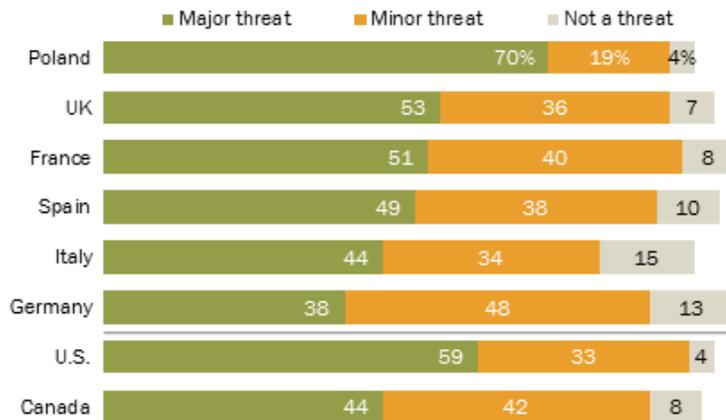
Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey, Q12d & Q25d.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 11

Poland Most Worried about Russian Military Threat

How much of a military threat, if at all, is Russia to its neighboring countries, aside from Ukraine?



Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. Q27.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 12

Many of these nations also see Moscow's actions in Ukraine as a threat to their own safety. The overwhelming majority of people polled see Russia as some kind of threat, and nearly half of all people polled see Russia as a major threat to its neighbors. Poland specifically has a large majority (Figure 12) that believe Russia is a major threat to its neighbors in the wake of events in Ukraine⁴⁵.

Russia faced consequences in nearly every international organization it was a member of. Russia was first removed from the G8, followed by a stop to cooperation from NATO and the EU. Russia also saw fewer visits from Western delegates and

⁴⁵ Simmons, "NATO Public Opinion"

higher-ups⁴⁶. The relationship between German and Russian leaders has deteriorated to that of businesslike, with none of the previous cooperation and agreement found in past years⁴⁷. Cooperation between NATO and Moscow has disintegrated. Instead, the idea of Russia being a threat and an enemy to NATO has returned. Steps are being taken along NATO's eastern border to defend against potential Russian aggression such as deploying troops along Russia's border in the Baltics and in Poland⁴⁸.

As the West shuns Russia, Moscow finds new connections in the East. Russia has been noticeably increasing relations with Eastern countries for several years, but these efforts have become more noticeable since early 2014. Many of the more developed economies, such as Japan or South Korea, in Asia are reliant on the United States, and so have followed the Western example of placing sanctions on Russia. This makes China the most receptive trading partner in the region.

China has been amicable towards Russia in recent years because it has been through similar events⁴⁹. China has experienced its own revolutions, so understands Russia's fear of Maidan revolutions and their ability to spread. China is also against interfering in the domestic matters of other nations, so abstained from the UN Crimea vote. Actions like this have led to closer relations between China and Russia. Not all of Beijing's actions are motivated by sympathy, however. Russia finds itself without many partners, allowing China to get cheaper hydrocarbons. Russia can also be a valuable ally

⁴⁶ Dmitri Trenin, "The Ukraine Crisis and the Resumption of Great-Power Rivalry", Carnegie Moscow Center, 2014, pg. 8, accessed 3/10/2017 http://carnegieendowment.org/files/ukraine_great_power_rivalry2014.pdf

⁴⁷ Trenin, "The Ukraine Crisis", pg. 19

⁴⁸ Trenin, "The Ukraine Crisis", pg. 9

⁴⁹ Trenin, "The Ukraine Crisis", pg. 21

in the ongoing territory disputes along China's Pacific coastline. Further, China may be able to gain advanced weapons technology from Russia in return for continued trade partnerships. Closer ties between Beijing and Moscow could also lead to the intertwining of the Silk Road Project and the Eurasian Economic Union, further bonding Russia to the East⁵⁰. Thus, Russia's hybrid warfare in Ukraine seems to have benefitted Beijing. Moscow's actions have left few states willing to bargain with them, leaving most of the negotiating power in China's hands.

Russia's use of hybrid warfare in Ukraine has been met with varying reactions from domestic and foreign populations. Russians hail Putin as a hero because they believe he has stood up for their rights and culture, and is attempting to rebuild Russia into what it was before. Some of these ideas, if not all, most likely came from Russian media as they fermented support for the government, much like how Russian media in Ukraine polarized the Russian population. International opinion of Russia's actions in Ukraine is generally united as well. Western countries overwhelmingly condemn Moscow's decision to use force and hybrid tactics in Ukraine and refuse to accept that Crimea has been annexed by Russia. Russia has also gone from an occasionally unreliable trading partner, to a perceived threat and possible enemy to many European countries. NATO members are especially worried, as Russia may be looking to damage the organization by proving it is unreliable and Article V is not to be trusted. There may be some truth in that belief based on public opinion of how NATO should respond in that situation⁵¹. China has now become a major partner of Moscow's and the relationship

⁵⁰ Trenin, "The Ukraine Crisis", pg. 22

⁵¹ Simmons, "NATO Public Opinion"

will most likely continue to grow as Russia finds itself further ostracized from the West. This could lead to military cooperation and has already amounted to trade deals and energy agreements lasting for decades. Putin may have lost some popularity in the West, but there was little there to be had in the first place. Instead, he has chosen to be feared in the West, revered in his own country, and an ally to the East. This has placed him in a more advantageous position for the future.

CONCLUSION

Based on these findings, regarding the pre-existing conditions, the Russian economy, and political ramifications of hybrid warfare, it can be determined that Russia's use of hybrid warfare was a relative success. As I mentioned earlier, Russia's goals for hybrid warfare in Ukraine have not been entirely disclosed, so some must be assumed. Moscow has said that their motivation for intervening in Ukraine comes from the need to protect ethnic Russians across the globe. It is extremely plausible that Russia also chose to use force in Ukraine to push back NATO expansionism. Moscow has often let their displeasure with NATO's eastern growth be known, arguing tooth and nail against both the EU and NATO's expansion eastward. Leaders in Moscow have also shown a tendency to use military force as a political tool. The people of Russia respond favorably to demonstrations of Russian strength. Events in Ukraine could be much of the same. Finally, Russia may have hoped that conflict in the Donbass area would lead to the Russian border moving further west.

Russia's annexation of Crimea made it impossible for Ukraine to join NATO or the EU. Both organizations have strict rules of controlling all of one's territory. By causing friction in the Donbass region, Russia further removed Ukraine's chances of becoming a European ally. So, were it a goal of Russia's to keep neighboring nations from joining Western organizations, Russia's use of hybrid warfare would have been extremely successful. Russia was able to fragment Ukraine without needing to admit

guilt until much later. When Moscow did admit to its military involvement, the media was able to turn the events into a success for all of Russia.

Shows of force often come with an increase in leader popularity, and Russia is no different. Even though the Russian people face economic downturn and international backlash, they still believe Putin to be a great leader. Their support is likely tied to the spin Moscow has been able to put on events. Because Russia is fighting for Russians everywhere, the Russian people feel better protected. The annexation of Crimea is not illegal; it is only the restoration of the peninsula to its rightful homeland. By using the media to twist events into a favorable light, Putin's administration has indeed become more popular.

Finally, Russia may have been attempting to pull some or all of Ukraine within its borders, striving for what has been called New Russia (or Novorossiia)⁵². As of now, Russia has only succeeded in gaining Crimea, and even that is debatable, as many nations refuse to acknowledge the referendum. Along the Ukrainian-Russian border, the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics have declared themselves apart from Ukraine. They have not joined Russia, however, and it is unlikely Ukraine will allow them independence at any point soon. Here is the first goal that Russia did not achieve immediately. In the coming years, it is not likely, but possible, that these People's Republics will win their independence. Should this happen, they will most likely quickly ally themselves with Russia, becoming dependent on Russia to keep them afloat. So while Russia has not

⁵² 'Address by President of the Russian Federation', President of Russia website, 18 March 2014, accessed 3/21/2017 <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>

been able to gain as much territory as they may have hoped, it is still possible for them to do so in the future.

As I stated in chapter 2, these successes did not come without substantial costs. However, Russia's successes with hybrid warfare in Ukraine have outweighed whatever price tags may be associated with them. Russia has kept Ukraine from becoming part of the West. They have also proven that they are able to exert control over nations within their sphere of influence. Putin has come out of the crisis with a higher popularity rating than ever before, and will most likely use this to his advantage in the upcoming Russian elections. Russia has gained Crimea and promised the people to raise their standard of living. While this proves to be a costly project, it will ingratiate the people of Crimea to Russia. Based on this, Russia has been successful in its use of hybrid warfare in Ukraine. Because Russia has been successful, it stands to reason that Moscow may see fit to continue the practice of hybrid aggression in the future. Countries that have similar vulnerabilities to Ukraine, such as the Baltics, may soon become targets.

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