

## RUSSIA’S GRAND STRATEGY – A PREDICTABLE MODEL

**Col.PhD Ion PURICEL**  
**Assistant Professor, NDU Carol I, Bucharest**  
**/ student, NDU /NWC, Washington, US**

### **ABSTRACT**

*THE PAPER FORMULATES A POSSIBLE, FORESEEABLE RUSSIA’S GRAND STRATEGY SEEN FROM RUSSIA’S PERSPECTIVE USING AMERICAN CONCEPTS, ANALYZE AND ASSESS ITS COHERENCE. THE GRAND STRATEGY WILL STATE THE RUSSIA’S NATIONAL INTERESTS, THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES NEEDED TO BE ACCOMPLISHED DESPITE ANY EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL SECURITY THREATS AND SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITIES APPEARED FOR THE NEXT YEARS TO COME.*

*THIS FUNDAMENTAL SECURITY PAPER TRIES TO ACCOMMODATE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES DERIVED FROM PRESERVING AND DEFENDING NATIONAL INTERESTS WITH THE MEANS AND RESOURCES EXISTED OR TO BE BUILT ACKNOWLEDGING THAT IN THE PRESENT THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER IS DEEPLY PERTURBED BY MANY CRISES AND WARS, LACK OF TRUST AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE GREAT POWERS IN MAINTAINING THE STATUS-QUO WHICH TOGETHER WITH THE CONTRADICTIONARY EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION AND THE RACE FOR RESOURCES ARE THREATENING TO IGNITE A GLOBAL CATASTROPHIC WAR.*

**KEY WORDS:** RUSSIA, GRAND STRATEGY, AMERICAN CONCEPTS, NATIONAL INTERESTS, SECURITY, THREATS, OPPORTUNITIES, GOALS, OBJECTIVES

*“Russia has been and will continue to be a great country due to its people merits and a strong leadership”*

Grand strategy requires a clear understanding of the nature of the international environment, a country’s highest goals and interests within that environment, the primary threats to those goals and interests, and the ways that finite resources can be used to deal with competing challenges and opportunities[1].

The Russia’s National Interests, grouped in the Security Domain and the Cultural /Civilizational Domain are as follows:

- a) Security Domain:
  - Maintaining sovereignty and integrity of Russia;
  - Avoiding War and preserving Peace;
  - Preventing the hegemony of any country in Global International Affairs and struggling for a multipolar world;
  - Strengthening the Unity inside the Russian State;
  - Exploiting Russia’s natural resources together with modernizing and diversifying Russian economy;

b) Cultural & Civilizational Domain:

- Preserving and recuperating Russian Heritage;
- Developing Russian culture and civilization;

The identified **Threats** to the outlined National Interests are as follows:

- The Eastward NATO and E.U. enlargement;
- The U.S. unilateral military interventionism policy and its hostility to Russia;
- The deterioration of the International Order and the International Law;
- The Missile Defense developments;
- The U.S. and E.U. economic sanctions on Russia;
- The tendency of Russia’s economic and political isolation;
- The development of the new alternative energy technologies and political consequences;
- The National & Religious separatism and extremism;
- The Globalization inequities;
- The Proliferation of NGOs supported by foreign countries having an anti-national agenda;
- The “Western values” expansion (homosexuality, gay marriage etc);
- The Proliferation of other than orthodox beliefs inside Russia;
- The Russian minority discrimination in “near abroad”;
- The State’s representatives corruption and the unfair repartition of country’s riches;
- The demographic downturn.

Despite the vigorous Threats to National Interests, there are, also, **Opportunities** needed to be exploited for preserving and defending the stressed National Interests such as:

- The existence of strong, national oriented leadership;
- Syria crisis leverage and the Russia’s leading role in the peaceful solving of Syrian chemical dossier;
- Iran nuclear dossier leverage;
- The Russia-China political, economic and military cooperation;
- The BRIC and the Eurasian Economic Union existence and development;
- The E.U.’s lack of unity regarding the security and economic issues;
- The environmentalist movements against freaking technologies;
- The loyal Russian minority existence in “near abroad” countries;
- The Kosovo precedent;
- The Russia’s economic recovery and the Military build-up;
- The Nuclear deterrence;
- Crimea joining Russia;
- Russia’s support for U.S. and NATO presence in Afghanistan;
- Russia’s Space achievements and developments;
- The Foreign friendly media existence and the pro-Russian government Internet sites;
- The Olympic Games and other International events catalysts for showing the Russia’s greatness;
- The Orthodox Church support.

The **Goals** serving National Interests and addressing Threats and Opportunities are as follows:

- Preventing further NATO and EU enlargements toward Russia’s borders;
- Opposing the U.S.’s policy and actions for World hegemony;
- Assuring the U.N. frame’s preeminence in solving international issues;
- Releasing the U.S. and E.U. economic sanctions;
- Opposing the tendency to isolate Russia;
- Supporting Russian Orthodox Church revival;
- Fighting against corruption and the drainage of country’s national resources;
- Developing BRIC;
- Developing Eurasian Economic Union;
- Strengthening Russian Military Capabilities;
- Supporting friendly governments /countries;
- Supporting and defending Russian minorities rights;
- Supporting the Environmentalist movements;
- Encouraging the demographic growth.

The measurable **Objectives** serving the National Interests and addressing Threats and Opportunities meant to achieve the outlined goals are as follows:

- to stop NATO and EU expansion in former Soviet countries;
- to demonstrate to the US and NATO that Russia has the military potential to strike their territory if the war starts;
- to rise the operational capabilities of Russia’s Armed Forces;
- to modernize the Nuclear Forces Arsenal;
- to threaten the sites /countries housing the American facilities for the Missile Defense Shield;
- to strength the multifaceted cooperation with the other countries opposing Americans, especially with China;
- to support pro-Russian separatist rights and claims in the “near-abroad” countries;
- to prevent an E.U.’s unitary point of view regarding security and the economic issues;
- to strength the military cooperation with the other states which oppose the U.S. and NATO;
- to bring to justice all those persons who brought prejudices to the majority of the Russian people;
- to support financially Russians for having more children;
- to limit and prevent the spreading of “Western values” in Russia.

It’s is more than acceptable to consider that the key in assuring the coherence of the Russia’s Grand Strategy by connecting all these components presented from Russia’s perspective, rests in its current top leadership, the president Vladimir Putin.

In Russia’s well known tradition and style the presence of a strong leader, an authoritarian one is more than been accepted, this is needed /required by the vast majority of the Russian people starting with the Middle Age time.

The incentives of a Russian Grand Strategy appeared under Vladimir Putin Presidency after the Russian victory in the 2nd Chechen War, then it developed and finalized coherently this year under the same Presidency.

Analyzing in objective manner the Russia's Grand Strategy we can find easily that it is consistently coherent and workable, focusing on preserving and defending the National Interests outlined in it.

Regarding the perception of treats /opportunities to the Russia's National Interests grouped in Security domain (home, international, economy) there are facts and evidences which lead to these conclusions.

For instance, the NATO enlargement process, despite the Russia's opposition, took place successively three times, in 1999, 2004 and 2009, the U.S being the decisive factor.

Moreover, at Bucharest NATO Summit in April 2008, NATO was at the point of offering NATO membership to Georgia and Ukraine.

In the same time, the US through NATO, without having an UN legal mandate, in pursuing its unilateral military interventionism policy bombarded a sovereign European country - Yugoslavia and crushed its territorial integrity by recognizing Kosovo independence despite the Russia's vehement opposition – so creating a very dangerous precedent for the International order by opening the Pandora box of recognizing the Sovereignty of National minorities territories and putting the entire International system under the big question mark.

Altogether, despite the Russia's strong opposition, in 2002, the President George W. Bush retreated the US from the ABM Treaty signed in 1972 which maintained the strategic nuclear equilibrium more than 30 years so triggering a new strategic weapons race.

Moreover, by deciding to install Missile Defense installations initially in Poland and Czech Republic and finally in Poland and Romania, despite the Russia's strong opposition, by creating an asymmetric strategic tools the U.S. put in danger the strategic equilibrium and directly endangering Russia's security.

By supporting the former Ukrainian opposition in removing from power through a coup the democratic elected president Victor Ianukovych and helping install an anti-Russian government, the US support an anti-national regime who fight its own people.

Moreover, the US and EU not only disconsider the Russian minority rights and the Russia's call for a just political settlement in Ukraine but put in force the painful economic sanctions against Russia hurting the life of Russian people.

In order to isolate Russia, the U.S. and E.U. encouraged and put pressure on other countries to join them in applying sanctions on Russia or create alternative to Russia's energy exports.

The National - Religious separatism originating in Caucasus region which led to a two bloody conflicts in Chechnya in 1996 and 1999 and numerous terrible attacks afterwards like those in Moscow Nord-Ost Theatre in 2002 or Beslan in 2004 and many others throughout the country is threatening the unity and integrity of the whole country.

The Globalization phenomenon as it is today is favoring a inequitable transfer of information, money, resources and people between other countries and Russia which could affect badly the Russia's Security. This phenomenon in conjunction with the State's representatives corruption and the unfair repartition of country's riches, seen as feeding the large pockets of oligarchs create a strong frustration inside the Russian honest, working people which, together with the Communist memories, affect badly the Russia's Security by rising the potential for revolt or even for Revolution.

The Russian minority discrimination in “near abroad”, especially in Ukraine and the Baltic States where the Russian language, despite being spoken in certain regions by the majority of population, is not recognized as official language and, moreover, some of these governments even are not offering the citizenship to Russian speakers people by their natural rights of birth, is a threat both for Russia’s Security and also Cultural & Civilizational Domains.

Despite the efforts have been made by the last governments the population growth rate is still negative (-0.03%) being a huge threat for Russia’s security on medium and long term and representing one of the biggest concerns and priorities for any Russian government.

The various Religious and non-Religious organizations supported from Western countries which have flourished on Russia’s territory since the end of the Cold War, brought with themselves not only the tolerance of other faiths but a lot of so called “western values” including a no-limit sexual liberties – homosexuality, gay marriage etc) all of these aiming to hurt Russian tradition and values.

When it comes to **Opportunities** needed to be exploited for preserving and defending the Russia’s National interests in order to aggregate the national resources in accomplishing the goals and objectives to serve those interests one of the main opportunity is the Presidency of Vladimir Putin whose “Ars Politica”, issued in 2005, was that “the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century”[2].

The Syria crisis and Iran nuclear dossiers offered and continue to offer to Russia a very good opportunity to preserve both Peace and its international interests, to prevent American /NATO unilateral military actions and so protecting International Law and allowing International Organisms to work for preventing War.

The cooperation with China was and it is a big opportunity further to be exploited in this unfriendly global environment at all levels: political – mainly, inside UN; military – through selling weapons to China and bilateral exercises; economic exchanges. In this line, it is worth to remember that amid sanctions, in May, China and Russia signed a \$400 billion gas deal[3], giving Moscow a megamarket for its leading export and linking two major powers that have drawn closer to counter the clout of the United States and Europe.

In the same time, trying to balance the US and EU mighty economic power and alleviate their sanctions, Russia takes advantage of being member of the BRIC and the Eurasian Economic Union, fostering cooperation with strong emerging economies and resources rich countries inside these organizations. Together, the four original BRIC countries comprise more than 2.8 billion people or 40 percent of the world’s population, cover more than a quarter of the world’s land area over three continents, and account for more than 25 percent of global GDP[4].

The lack of EU’s coherence in political and economic field has been exploited by the Russian leadership by setting up different energy deals with the key European actors on bilateral basis as those with Germany, France, Italy and other friendly actors as Hungary at preferential prices seeding frustration and deepening the mistrust inside the European Union.

The Russian Nuclear Arsenal modernized represents the supreme deterrence and guaranty for Russian Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity, while the overall Military

Build-Up offers, beside the guaranty of successful defending of the country, very important incomes to the national budget from selling weapons.

The loyal Russian minority existence in “near abroad” countries together with Kosovo precedent and the International Law protecting the right of people to self-determination, offered Russia the occasion to annex Crimea with all strategic, economic and territorial gains without war and, also, allow it to have a strong leverage regarding the Ukraine’s political future by preventing it joining NATO and EU.

One very important opportunity for Russia are the environmentalist movements who are strongly protesting against the new energy alternative technologies and so opposing them help the Russia’s economy.

In the same time, as open windows for further normal cooperation with the US /NATO /EU, have to be used the Russia’s support for U.S. and NATO presence in Afghanistan and its leading role in the International Space Station functioning.

The Foreign friendly media channels like “Russia Today” and “Russia’s Voice” together with pro-Russian government Internet sites are extremely important tools to be used for informing large groups of people about Russia’s official policy and achievements in many issues.

The International events like “2014 Sochi Olympic Games” and other International events together with the Orthodox Church support are very important tools for showing a civilized face of Russia and keeping the unity of the nation.

The coherent **Objectives** serving Russia’s National Interests and addressing Threats and Opportunities meant to achieve the outlined goals are of a great variety of measurable, mandatory steps to be followed.

Russia is decided to stop NATO and EU expansion in the former Soviet countries even with the price of War if US /NATO continue not to take into consideration its security interests and step forward in its backyard with Ukraine and Georgia membership. The military intervention in Georgia in 2008, the annexation of Crimea and the support for Russian-separatists in Ukraine show that Russia would not tolerate any eastward NATO /EU extension.

Russia is also decided to make no secret about its intentions and possession of the required capabilities both conventional and nuclear to strike US and NATO deep in their territory if the war starts. So, the Soviet style show of force restarted with the T-95 “Bear” Strategic bomber missions many times violating NATO Air Space and approaching to US-Canada Air space to a position for launching nuclear missiles, couple weeks ago.

In the same time, the prime-minister Dmitry Rogozin announced Russia’s ambitious plan to modernize the entire Russian nuclear arsenal until 2020. Till now, it was tested and operationalized a new long range nuclear missile SS-27 “Topol” and its naval version “Bulava”[5].

Due to impossibility to convince the Americans not to install any missile shield in Europe, Russia announced the deployment of its accurate short range ballistic missiles 9k720 “Iskander” (SS-26 Stone) in Kaliningrad region targeting Missile Defense Shield sites[6].

The Multifaceted cooperation with the other countries especially those who oppose Americans is a main Russian policy having a big tradition from the Soviet times. The biggest Russian weapons buyers are China, India, Venezuela, Iran and others, the weapons to be sell to China and India including Su-37 Fighter aircraft and, also, modern

submarines. One very sensitive issue is the potential selling of very capable S-300 Air Defense systems to Iran for protecting nuclear sites against any air attack.

Since its installation in power, the present Russian leadership has been preoccupied to restore not only the Russia's greatness but, also, to Russian citizens the trust in their government and fairness and justice. So, they have created conditions to make justice for the people and have made efforts to bring to justice and condemn those tycoons who have stolen the Russian people. In this line, have been arrested and jailed strong oligarchs like Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Vladimir Yevtushenkov[7].

Since the demographic downturn is a very dangerous threat both for all national interests comprised in the Security Domain and also for the Russian Cultural & Civilizational Domain, once acknowledged about that weaknesses, the Russian leadership has made constant efforts to redress the situation. Thus, the Russian Government is offering many stimulus for having the second children, including a bonus of 9,000 \$[8].

Acknowledging that spreading Western values is a danger for Russian people and Russia as strong country, having the Orthodox Church blessing the Russia's leadership has started to control strictly NGO's backed by foreigners so labeled as anti-national and, also, impose sanctions regarding the sexual liberty.

Thus, under a controversial law approved by President Vladimir Putin last year, NGOs funded from abroad and engaged in "political" activities are required to register as "foreign agents"[9], or face fines of up to 500,000 rubles (\$16,000) for NGOs and up to 300,000 rubles (\$10,000) for NGO directors[10].

About 300 NGOs nationwide, according to rights activists' figures, have been subjected since March to exhaustive checks by tax officials, Justice Ministry representatives and prosecutors. Nineteen human rights and environmental organizations have so far been classified as "foreign agents", a term which critics say is synonymous with "spy".

Regarding the sexual liberty, just six months before Russia hosts the 2014 Winter Games, Vladimir Putin signed a law allowing police officers to arrest tourists and foreign nationals they suspect of being homosexual, lesbian or "pro-gay" and detain them for up to 14 days[11]. Earlier in June, the Russian President signed yet another antigay bill, classifying "homosexual propaganda" as pornography.

In conclusion, **it is a strong coherence** between Russia's national interests, threats /opportunities perception to /for them, and goals /objectives, serving these interests and addressing the identified threats / opportunities.

## REFERENCES

- [1]. Hal Brands, *What Good is Grand Strategy? Power and Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush*, Cornell University Press, ISBN 978-0-8014-5246-8, p.3
- [2]. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/4480745.stm>, Oct. 25, 2014
- [3]. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-11-10/russia-china-add-to-400-billion-gas-deal-with-accord.html>, Nov 10, 2014
- [4]. <http://www.globalsherpa.org/bric-countries-brics>, Oct 8, 2014
- [5]. <http://defensetech.org/2014/10/31/russia-successful-in-test-launches-of-bulava-missile>, Nov. 1, 2014
- [6]. [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/17/world/europe/russia-deploys-missiles-in-western-region.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/17/world/europe/russia-deploys-missiles-in-western-region.html?_r=0), Nov. 12, 2014

- [7]. <http://www.rferl.org/content/evtushenko-arrested-russia-sistema-money-laundering-charge/26588656.html>, Oct. 17, 2014
- [8]. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/11/world/europe/11russia.html?pagewanted=all>, Oct. 22, 2014
- [9]. <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/russia.html>, NGO Law Monitor: Russia, Sept. 26, 2014
- [10]. [http://rapsinews.com/judicial\\_information/20130624/267894551.html](http://rapsinews.com/judicial_information/20130624/267894551.html), Russian Legal Information Agency, Oct. 18, 2014
- [11]. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/22/opinion/russias-anti-gay-crackdown.html>, Aug. 23, 2014